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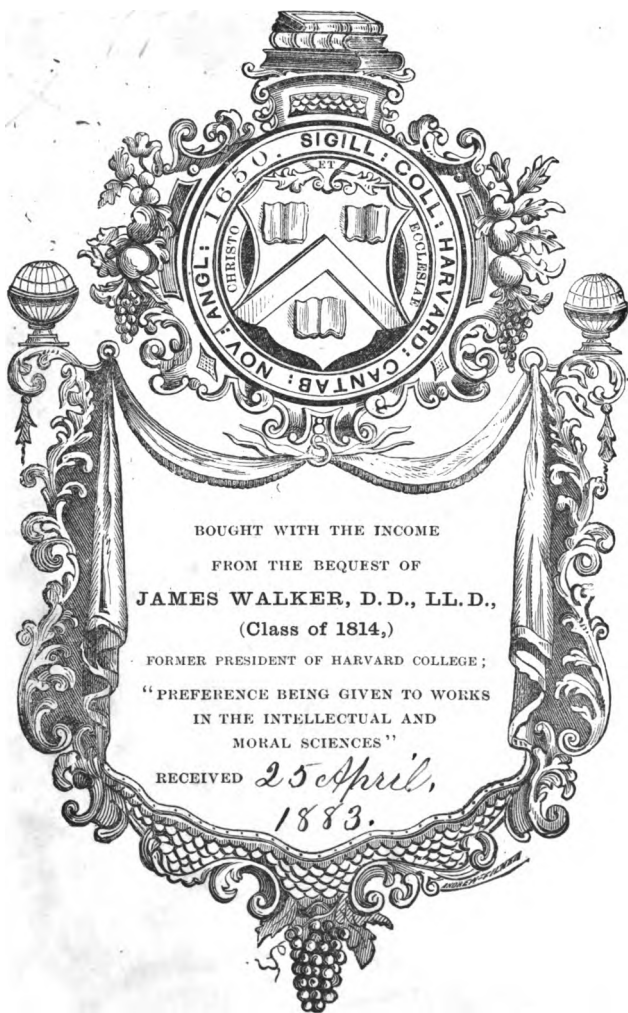
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LECTURES

ON THE

CUMULATIVE EVIDENCES OF DIVINE REVELATION

ADDRESSED TO TEACHERS ENGAGED IN THE
HIGHER EDUCATION OF GIRLS, AND TO OTHER
THOUGHTFUL AND CULTIVATED WOMEN

BY

L. F. MARCH PHILLIPPS

WRITER OF—MY LIFE AND WHAT SHALL I DO WITH IT—RECORDS OF THE
MINISTRY OF THE REV. E. J. MARCH PHILLIPPS—STRONG AND FREE—
BATTLE OF THE TWO PHILOSOPHIES, ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE following Lectures were written for the use of the Student teachers of the Ladies' College, Cheltenham, and were given to the whole staff in 1878, at the request of the Lady Principal. It was felt that as educated students it is impossible they should not be continually meeting with those countless modern attacks on our Christian Creed, which in one form or another are incessantly issuing from the press; and that whilst, as teachers of others, it is essential they should understand and appreciate the strength of its defences, their daily work allows them little time for searching out, one by one, the individual fallacies which underlie these individual attacks, or for studying that vast mass of defensive literature, which, valuable as it is for the matured minds of educated Christians, necessarily lies outside the regular course of Christian instruction needed by their younger pupils.

I need hardly say that the main evidences here brought forward are no more new, than are the objections and difficulties brought against revelation. Much of the book is a systematized summary of the arguments of competent authorities, or from works, which though anonymous, seem to me to speak wisely and clearly on the special subject under consideration. But as the flood of doubts and denials which is beating against the Rock of our Faith, is to so great an extent poured out in our periodical literature ; I have purposely made large use of the scientific and Christian answers which the same literature affords in almost equal abundance, and as I venture to think with sounder information, juster criticism and better reasoning.

The arrangement of these facts and arguments is almost the only part of the work which is my own : it was suggested both by the character of my audience, and by the scientific or quasi-scientific nature of those doubts and difficulties, with which they were most likely to meet. Speaking not to girls, but to women of education and culture, accustomed to the ordinary methods of science, it seemed natural to throw the arguments I had time to bring before them, into the corresponding logical forms : and I soon found the use

of this method a great assistance in securing clearness and accuracy of statement and—I hope also in some degree—of thought : all the principal arguments on both sides being thus reduced, however roughly, to the same formula, the amount and comparative value of both became more readily apparent.

The Lectures have now been carefully revised and in some cases rearranged. Repetitions which were necessary in spoken lectures, given in some cases at intervals of weeks, have been omitted. The tenth and thirteenth, which had to be compressed when given into one on account of the limited time at the disposal of my hearers, have been completed on the lines of the original syllabus ; and throughout some new matter has been here and there introduced out of the mass of evidence and criticism which is continually pouring in.

It is so difficult to do justice to difficulties one does not feel, and to arguments with which one almost entirely disagrees ; so hard to expose fallacies without seeming to impute motives ; I can hardly hope to have fully succeeded in what I have honestly aimed at. But the reader will find the more important of the two first stated in the words of their authors : and should wrong

motives anywhere appear to be attributed to the statements of non-believers, I can only say that I have neither intended to impute them, nor do I believe in their presence.

L. F. M. PHILLIPPS.

CHELTENHAM,

Oct. 30, 1882.

SYLLABUS OF CONTENTS.

CUMULATIVE EVIDENCES OF OUR DIVINE REVELATION.

PART I. PHILOSOPHICAL EVIDENCE.

PART II. EVIDENCES OF THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL SCIENCES TO THE TRUTHS OF REVELATION.

PART III. INTERNAL EVIDENCES.

PART I.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| LECTURE I. PRESENT STATE OF THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING ITS TRUTH | 3 |

Definition of 'Revelation'.

1. The nature of the evidences it affords.
 - i. Made in an organised series of historical facts.
 - ii. Found to be a present spiritual life and power.
 - iii. An adequate system of Philosophy.
 - iv. Its logical position.
2. Position of the attack upon it.
 - i. Changed by the controversy of the 18th century.
 - ii. By the solidarity of natural and revealed religion.
3. Some characteristics of popular scepticism.
 - i. Irrelevancy of many objections.
 - ii. Vagueness of statements, method, and thought.
 - iii. Ignorance displayed
 - a. of the history of Christianity,
 - b. of the Christian creed,
 - c. of what constitutes evidence.
 - iv. Use of false tests of truth.

4. Position of inquirers.
 - i. False position : giving up the objective facts of our Creed.
 - ii. The just choice of authorities.
 - iii. Limitations of authority.
5. Summary and conclusion.

LECTURE II. OF EVIDENCE AND ITS FOUNDATION . . . 32

1. All human knowledge or science founded on evidence.
 - i. Obtained by experience,
 - ii. or by inference.
2. Methods of inference.
 - i. Direct, from particulars to particulars,
 - ii. Inductive, from particulars to generals,
 - iii. Deductive, from generals to particulars.
3. The subject of knowledge is relations.

Four kinds of relations knowable, hence four divisions of science.

 - i. Mathematical relations,
 - ii. Physical,
 - iii. Moral,
 - iv. Religious.
4. Processes of inquiry
 - i. and of verification.
 - ii. Degrees of certainty attainable in the two first sciences.
 - iii. Complexity of moral and religious phenomena :
 - iv. Amount of cumulative evidence afforded by them.
5. Objection. No ground for conviction except through the senses.

Answer i. Analysis of sense impressions into

 - a. Sensations known through consciousness,
 - b. Interpretations put on these sensations by our minds.

- Answer ii. Basis of convictions so obtained, two ultimate beliefs in the veracity,
 a. of our interpretations,
 b. of our memory.
 iii. Conclusion : true basis of these ultimate beliefs.

LECTURE III. ONTOLOGICAL EVIDENCE, OR THE EXISTENCE
 OF THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE . . . 59

Résumé.

1. The problem stated : how can we know that God is.
 - i. Definitions of 'knowledge.'
 - ii. Three conceivable modes of knowing.
 - a.* Intuitive or absolute.
 - b.* By ultimate belief.
 - c.* By experience and inference.
 - iii. Our knowledge of existence based on *b.*
 - a.* We observe properties and infer existences.
 - b.* Experience distinguishes the phenomena of mind from those of matter.
 - c.* Reason infers the difference of their antecedent existences.
2. Fallacy of Materialism.
 - i. Accepts evidence of consciousness for presence of matter.
 - ii. Denies it for presence of mind.
 - iii. Ends in denying all existence except individual consciousness.
3. We infer God's absolute, from His relative existence.
4. Marks of the presence of an Intelligent First Cause.
 - i. Definitions of Cause.
 - ii. All human science assumes the uniformity of causation.
 - iii. Three possible hypotheses of the cause of the universe.
 - a.* A causeless commencement.
 - b.* A first, self-subsisting cause.
 - c.* Eternal non-commencement.

- iv. *b*, the only admissible hypothesis.
- v. First cause either eternal matter: or eternal living mind.
- 5. Character of First Cause inferred from the marks in the resulting cosmos.
 - i. Marks of correlation, order and uniformity, anticipation and preparations.
 - ii. Infer intelligence, will, and volition in the Creative First Cause.
- 6. Growing consent to this conclusion.

LECTURE IV. EVIDENCES OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, AS THE
DIVINE FIRST CAUSE 85

- 1. Recapitulation.
 - i. Argument from the relations in which we find ourselves.
 - ii. Relations are the mark of two related entities.
 - iii. Science consists in inferring from a known relation, the character of unknown correlative.
 - iv. Our relation as created, places us in relation to our Creator.
- 2. Our conscience places us in moral relation to a moral Creator.
 - i. Its binding spiritual right to command us, demands a supreme spiritual authority.
 - ii. The utilitarian theory
 - a. assumes the world is on the whole righteously governed,
 - b. does not explain its binding authority.
 - iii. Theory of social impressions considered.
 - iv. Theism the indispensable postulate of conscience.
- 3. Our consciously dependent condition, demands a sustaining correlative.
- 4. The beauty and order of nature
 - i. are a revelation designedly made to our minds,
 - ii. demand a Revealer and Educator.

5. Agnostic objections analysed.
 - i. Limited comprehension not unreal.
 - ii. Partial conceptions not necessarily inconsistent.
6. Admission of Sceptics.
 - i. Vagueness and inadequacy of their schemes.
 - ii. The Comtist explanation.
 - a. Asserts the reality of man's religious relations.
 - b. Gives no really existing correlative.
 - iii. The worship of humanity : its object an abstract word.
 - iv. Prof. Clifford's explanation of conscience, the voice of our Father-man.
 - a. Our Father-man a personification or figure of speech.
 - b. This explanation inconsistent, and inadequate.
7. Conclusion. The Philosophy of our Divine Revelation, consistent and adequate.

PART II.

LECTURE V. REVELATIONS OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES
 COMPARED WITH THOSE OF SCRIPTURE . . . 115

1. Subject of Physical Science defined.
2. Limited extent of its evidence on the subject-matter of Revelation.
 - i. Three points on which both agree.
 - a. Unity of operations and continuity of law.
 - b. These laws not self-imposed.
 - c. The presence of specific breaks of continuity.
3. The teaching of Scripture and Physical Science on these points compared.
 - i. Scripture affirms,
 - a. Unity of cause, in God.
 - b. That God directs and sustains all the processes of nature.
 - c. That He designs to educate men's minds, by His visible works.

- d. That He designs their progress upwards.
 - e. That this present world began and will end at His command.
 - ii. Physical Science affirms, but cannot explain, the resulting phenomena, *e.g.*
 - a. The reign of law : not whence imposed.
 - b. The law of continuity, not its breaks.
- 4. Breaks of continuity :
 - i. The end of this world in its present form.
 - ii. Shows it must have had a beginning in time.
 - iii. The coming of energy or motion, first break of continuity.
- 5. Postulates of Modern Science.
 - i. The Atomic Theory, postulates the presence of a Creative will.
 - ii. The Nebulous Theory, postulates preparation and anticipation.
- 6. The Psalm of Creation.

LECTURE VI. REVELATIONS OF THE PHENOMENAL SCIENCES,
 COMPARED WITH THE PARALLEL ACCOUNTS
 IN THE SCRIPTURES 143

Recapitulation of Argument.

- 1. The second break of continuity: the coming of vegetable life.
 - i. The earth at first lifeless.
 - ii. History of its preparation for life,
 - a. Of the soil,
 - b. Of the air,
 - c. Of the water.
- 2. What life is and whence it came.
 - i. Not any form of energy or motion.
 - ii. Life directs or bends energy, for its own purposes.
 - iii. It never appears without a living antecedent.
 - iv. Professor Huxley's argument analysed.
 - v. Conclusion. Life comes from Life.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 3. The developement of life from simpler to more complex forms. | |
| i. Gives marks of direction throughout. | |
| ii. Struggle for existence insufficient to account for progress. | |
| 4. The third break of continuity, the addition of consciousness. | |
| i. Postulates a living conscious antecedent. | |
| ii. The coming of man ; connecting link with animals wanting. | |
| 5. Hypothesis : the true source of Life. | |
| Summary. | |

LECTURE VII. EVIDENCE OF THE MORAL SCIENCES, AS TO
MAN'S PRESENT CONDITION AND ITS ANTECE-
DENT CAUSES 171

1. Men's present condition.
 - i. The Scripture explanation.
 - a. Man made upright, an animal body and a living soul.
 - b. That he is now fallen.
 - c. That God is raising him to a higher, spiritual life.
 - ii. The Materialist's explanation.
 - a. Man evolved wholly by animal-life.
 - b. Has risen from the mere brute.
 - c. Will evolve some higher race.
 - d. Is annihilated at the body's death.
2. Evidence of the Moral Sciences as to a.
 - i. Our present condition one of internal conflict.
 - ii. Indicates a double nature.
3. Evidence as to b. Is this conflict healthy, or morbid, the fruit of a fall ?
 - i. Analogy of other developements.
 - ii. Evidence as to man's earliest known condition
 - a. Of geology.
 - b. Abnormally shortened life.

- c. Condition of existing savages.
 - d. Evidence from language.
 - e. From archæology.
 - f. Tends to show man's earliest stage, one of high developement.
- 4. Our present evil condition not explained by our moral constitution.
 - i. Motives for action.
 - ii. Pleasure and pain the result of fulfilled or broken relations.
 - iii. Righteousness consists in fulfilment of moral relations.
- 5. Not explained by our normal social circumstances.
 - i. These are, family, tribal and national life.
 - ii. Their tendency to develop the moral affections, and self-control.
- 6. Conclusion. Discrepancy between antecedent causes, and actual results, witnesses to the fall.

LECTURE VIII. EVIDENCE OF THE MORAL SCIENCES, AS TO
THE NECESSITY, EFFICIENCY, AND POSSIBILITY OF
THE REDEMPTION 199

Proposition I. Divine Redemption necessary:

- 1. Law of moral stability=law of habit.
- 2. Secures moral progress when dominated by hope.
- 3. The law of habit analysed.
 - i. Action springs from emotion.
 - ii. Moral emotions acted on, become stronger; resisted—
weaker.
 - iii. Actions repeated require less and less effort.
- 4. The results of this law.
 - i. In a healthy normal state, results in constant moral progress.
 - ii. In a fallen morbid state—in progress in evil.
 - iii. As men cannot break off these results, they cannot deliver themselves.

5. Analogy suggests a higher power and mode of life as the remedy.

Proposition II. Divine Redemption an efficient remedy.

1. Any efficient remedy must be coextensive with disease.
 - i. Delivering conscience from guilt.
 - ii. Giving a higher power of will = a new spiritual life.
2. The Atonement secures the first.
The new birth supplies the second condition.
3. The new Life.
 - i. Described as new in kind.
 - ii. Is in continuity with previous course of life development.
 - iii. Is reasonable in its declared source, and means of growth.

Proposition III. Divine Redemption a possible remedy.

1. Our latent but unsatisfied capacities :
 - i. Show a real capacity for receiving and developing a higher life.
 - ii. Demand immortality for full developement.
2. Moral Science suggests the future existence, essential to our full redemption.
 - i. By our unlimited capacity for upward progress.
 - ii. By our possession of potential capacities, useless in this life.
 - iii. By the belief in a future life, being practically essential to morality.

LECTURE IX. (*supplementary*). PHYSICAL AND MORAL OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED 230

1. Objections from Physical Science to supernatural events.
 - i. The old classification of facts as natural and supernatural.
 - ii. Superseded by Modern Science, is now unmeaning.
 - iii. Definition of 'miracles' is subjective.

2. Three classes of moral difficulties.
 - i. That evil is permitted, is irreconcilable with God's omnipotence.
 - ii. That the innocent suffer—with His justice.
 - iii. The future treatment of the impenitent, as revealed in Scripture—with His goodness.
3. Scientific and logical value of these objections nil.
 - i. Being negative, and mainly founded on our ignorance.
 - ii. Because difficulties are inevitable, when knowledge is incomplete.
4. How these difficulties are to be treated, practically.
 - i. Elimination of those due to misconceptions.
 - ii. Right disposition and method in dealing with real difficulties.
5. First difficulty: the presence of evil: this turns on
 - i. The meanings attached to Evil.
 - ii. Self-willed suffering being needless, to be eliminated.
 - iii. Amount of suffering and preponderance of happiness.
 - iv. The true nature of God's omnipotence.
6. Second class of difficulties, turns on
 - i. The real relation of sin with misery,
 - ii. On the ends for which sorrow and death are used.
7. Third difficulty: of future punishment: turns on
 - i.
 - a. The amount and limitations of many isolated passages of Scripture,
 - b. The correctness of human inferences from some of these.
 - ii. This question lies beyond human science,
 - a. As to what the treatment of the impenitent ought to be.
 - b. As to what it will be.
8. Conclusion:
 - i. What is not yet fully revealed on this question.
 - ii. What is certainly and without doubt revealed.

PART III.

LECTURE X. MARKS OF REVELATION AND INSPIRATION
IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH . . . 269

Proposition I. asserts the direct revelation of our religious relations.

Proposition II. the divine inspiration of our sacred records.

Proposition I.

1. Our religion an existing historical fact, of the first magnitude.
2. Its origin
 - i. either human and unreliable,
 - ii. or of God, and trustworthy.
 - iii. To be decided by the marks found in its contents, and the circumstances of its growth.
3. Direct Divine revelation probable because
 - i. Revelations of God are made to us in His visible works, but are incomplete.
 - ii. The law of continuity demands their continuation.
 - iii. The alleged method of revelation, inspiration, a fact of human experience.
 - iv. Governs the course of human history.
 - v. The Bible law of selection, verified in history.
 - vi. It is based upon, and powerfully strengthens all true social relations.
4. It cannot be of human origin, because
 - i. It forms one progressive and continuous development.
 - ii. It is given chiefly in historical events.
 - iii. Its prophetic character, from its first commencement.
 - iv. It is still growing, and progressive.
 - v. Comparison with partial faiths.

Proposition II.

5. Marks of Inspiration in the Scriptures.
 - i. The many-sided fulness of its declarations.
 - ii. The unity of the Bible, though composed by forty different writers.

- iii. Its unique character, equally intelligible to all races and all periods.
- iv. Its unique results.
- 6. Conclusion.

LECTURE XI. THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORDS. . 299

Proposition I. The Old Testament historically true.

Proposition II. It contains an authentic Divine revelation.

Proposition I.

- i. The date of the Pentateuch : when first acknowledged.
- ii. The law and the history coincide, and are inseparable.
- iii. Evidence of contemporary traditions and records, to Genesis.
 - a. Ancient traditions of other races.
 - b. Early Babylonish tablets.
- iv. Geographical and Archæological evidence.
- v. The local colouring of the narratives of Old Testament uniformly correct.
- vi. Marks of Mosaic authorship.

Proposition II. The Old Testament authentic as a Divine revelation.

- i. Its social and political ideal of the Law, far above the age.
 - a. In the personal value of the individual, as a man.
 - b. In its care for the instruction of the masses.
 - c. In the equality of all before the law.
- ii. The holiness of the faith taught, and the worship required, far above that of any contemporary nation.
- iii. Its inseparable unity with the New Testament.
 - a. The witness of Christ Himself to the Old Testament.
 - b. That of His Apostles.
 - c. Identity of the Messiah of the Old Testament with the Christ of the New.

Conclusion.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| LECTURE XII. THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORDS . | 328 |

Three questions raised concerning these.

1. Do these books give contemporaneous evidence as to what the Apostles taught ?
2. How do we prove the continuity of the faith and doctrine of the Church from their time ?
3. Do the Gospels record the evidence of eye-witnesses ?

1. First question answered.

- i. By St Paul's four undisputed Epistles.
- ii. His Gospel founded on Christ's resurrection.
- iii. His teaching identical on this point with that of the other Apostles.
- iv. Give an accurate record of the common faith of Christians from A.D. 37 to 60.

2. Second question. Historical continuity from first to fourth century.

- i. Continuous life and faith in many separate churches.
- ii. The rapid conquests of the faith, and constant intercourse between the churches.
- iii. Use of New Testament lectionary in the churches.

3. Third question. The dates when our four Gospels were known and received.

- i. Universally received by A.D. 300.
- ii. Evidence of fathers in the third century.
- iii. Evidence in second century, and to every superhuman fact now held by the church.
- iv. Evidence in first century.

4. Internal evidence of New Testament books.

- i. Their great superiority to the writings of the immediate successors of the Apostles.
- ii. The evidences they afford of the cause and manner of their being written.
- iii. The Gospels exactly answer to the traditions of their authorship.

- iv. Unintentional coincidences and discrepancies
 - a. in the four Gospels,
 - b. in St Paul's Epistles and the Acts,
 - c. of the Epistles generally with the Gospels,
 - d. With contemporary histories, Josephus and others.

Conclusion.

LECTURE XIII. THE LIFE AND PERSON OF CHRIST, AND THE
RESULTS OF HIS COMING 361

Proposition. The demonstration of the Christian revelation,
is Christ Himself.

1. The absolute reality of Christ's life.
2. His transcendent greatness and majesty, acknowledged
by all.
3. Christ more than man.
 - i. His superhuman influence over man.
 - ii. His superhuman power in human history.
 - iii. His claims to be divine.
 - iv. His conduct only intelligible on the ground of these
claims.
4. The historical results of Christ's resurrection.
5. Incarnation and resurrection inseparable.
6. The miracles and resurrection necessary to establish
His claim.
7. Difficulties of Scepticism, having to account
 - i. for Christ Himself,
 - ii. for His continuous living power over man,
 - iii. for the resulting Christian life in His people,
 - iv. for His constant spiritual intervention in the hearts
and consciousness of men.
8. Conclusion.

PART I.
PHILOSOPHICAL EVIDENCE.

LECTURE I.

PRESENT STATE OF THE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING ITS TRUTH.

"Be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear."

I HAVE been asked to speak to you on the evidences of our Christian faith; or rather to point out to you some of the chief of those multitudinous chains of evidence which lead us up to the demonstration of the great facts of our creed, in order that you may the more readily study them, one by one, for yourselves. Certainly "the subject before us is not a vain one; it is our life."

I wish to use the words 'Divine revelation' at once in their most literal and their widest sense: as including all those great facts which God has from the first been discovering to the minds and consciences of men, concerning Himself, His relations to us, His dealings with us, His purposes for us; concerning our answering relations to God, and our hopes from Him. We include in it all that is properly included in 'Religion.'

"The discoveries of science are also revelations from God to the scientific inquirer;—the whole process of discovery and its discipline has been foreseen and overseen by Him, and so each scientific fact revealed is a word once given*." But these are religious facts only so

* *Claims of Bible and Science*, Prof. F. D. Maurice.

far as they reveal to us, by just inference, something of God in and by His works. So far as they do this they form parts of our Divine Revelation, and may be used in evidence for or against its other portions.

Now this revelation has all along been and still is a progressive one; it is not therefore yet completed. It has all along been imperfectly received, often mistakenly and in fragments. And hence there are many versions of it current in the world. For some have hold only of the earlier and elementary truths revealed, not having heard, or not having understood, that revelation of Christ which in the present æra forms its culmination and completion. But the Christian creed cannot be consistently held without receiving those prior truths; by the revelation of which God prepared men to comprehend it, and the knowledge of which it presupposes.

You will remember we are not now asserting the truth of this revelation: we are merely defining its extent, and pointing out the necessary relation between its several parts. For before we consider the evidences of its truth, or weigh the objections brought against it, we must have both these clearly mapped out before our minds.

Let us then glance briefly at the main features of our Divine Revelation now, in relation to the evidences they afford.

It is given to us in a long series of historical facts; in the explanation of those facts; and in deductions from them. Deny it as a revelation, it remains as a history, and you must deal with its records, and deny them or give them credence on the same ground, to the same extent, and on the same amount of evidence, which qualified critics require in judging of the veracity of other historical records of the like periods.

Then the earlier events of this long series were said to be preparations for those events which in due time actually followed them. And the whole antecedent series of preparations for Christ's coming, the place, time, and way, in which the Christian faith began and the history of its subsequent growth,—all these phenomena, which are not so much matters of revelation as of human history,—are quite intelligible and continuous sequences if the Christian record is true; but they have to be accounted for by those who deny its truth.

Then each great event as it occurred, was used at the time by men who said they were commissioned by God for that very purpose, as a means of unvailing something of His will, and of His relations to men. But now looking back on these distinct and partial revelations we find they form one consistent and progressive whole: each additional revelation becoming in its turn a true developement of the teaching which had preceded it some hundred years before, and a real and necessary foundation for those which followed hundreds of years after. Not only have the events formed an organic sequence, the doctrine learnt from them has had an organic developement.

Then the Christian faith is not only a history, and a doctrine embodied in history, it is a present life and power. It is a life which countless thousands of men and women and children, in every part of the world and of every race, have lived and are now living. They hold it in very various and often in conflicting forms; and yet it has been and is a new moral and spiritual power in them, individually and personally; their lives have evidently been changed, purified and elevated by it, it has broken down in them the tyranny of evil habit, and set them free to begin a new and holier life. Nor has the Christian faith been less

powerful socially than individually. For the last 1800 years it has been the mainspring of the progress of civilized nations: at the present moment it is, at least as distinctly as ever, the condition which mainly determines which races are progressive and which are not. And the higher the standard of morality of any nation is, the more distinctly is its elevation due to Christianity.

Once more: Our Divine Revelation is not only a history, a religion, a life-giving energy, a social power and a pure morality; it is also a philosophy: and it certainly does explain to some extent the Cosmos in which we find ourselves. It does explain the strange contradictions of our own condition; our boundless aspirations and our terrible failures; the yearnings of our inmost hearts and the meanness of our actual aims, the dire confusion of our moral condition. It does reveal us to ourselves.

Thus it is a many-sided, a very great and powerful Religion; and you will notice, that all these phenomena exist, so far as their evidences are concerned, independently of each other. The results of our Creed actually exist, whether we admit or deny that it is Divine. The gradual yet organic developement of our religion is just the same, whether we attribute it to God's teaching, or to the undesigned coincidences of so many individual thinkers, spread over at least a thousand years and writing each for the exigences of their own day and nation. The power of the faith of Christ is what it is, whether the records of His life are authentic or not. The experience men now have of His living power in themselves, is their experience whether they are right in referring it to Him or not. And if we deny our revelation as a divinely revealed philosophy we have still to receive it as a human theory, which both from its own truthfulness as to our actual moral and spiritual

condition, and from the vast results it has produced in the world, cannot be cast aside as false, without first knowing what it is and what are its evidences.

Here then we have several distinct series of phenomena, and we have a theory, consistent with itself, which accounts for each series individually, and for all collectively. The results demand some such history as the Scriptures give; the history, if true, demands and explains some such results as those we find. That all these distinct series of phenomena fit into and consistently follow each from the other, makes each corroborative evidence to a certain extent of the rest. But the disproof of one would not touch the rest. If the records of our constitutional history were found to be all fictitious, the actual constitution under which we are living would remain in every particular what it is; only it would remain unaccounted for. In like manner if we admit the great facts summed up in the Apostles' Creed, all these results fall into order, and become intelligible; but not one result is done away with by denying those antecedent facts. And all these manifold phenomena have got to be accounted for by those who deny the Christian explanation, before they can call on us to join them in their denial.

Do not let us fear boldly to take up this lowest ground. We have here many distinct series of sequences: and we have a theory, consistent with itself, which accounts for each one individually, and for the whole collectively. The rule inductive science gives as to such theories is this:

“When a theory, founded on some probable evidence, explains consistently a whole mass of phenomena; it is always accepted as true, and is applied to explain further phenomena of the same class.”

In order to overthrow such a theory, you must

"1st. Bring evidence to show it cannot be true:" and this must be positive, not merely negative evidence ;

2nd. Show that the theory does not account for the phenomena ; or

3rd. Bring forward some other theory that will take its place.

Now not one of these conditions has been as yet fulfilled. Some evidence has been alleged, to show that some of the historic facts of our Creed are either incredible or not proved : some allegations, that of the truths said to be revealed, some are not knowable. These are fairly matters for examination. But clearly neither of these, if admitted to the full, amount to a proof that our Christian creed *cannot* be true. No attempt has even been made, to establish the second point ; and as to the third, other theories have been brought forward to explain one or other of these manifold series : but at present these theories neither agree with each other, nor do any of them attempt to explain the whole collectively.

Our Divine Revelation then has not yet been deposed : we find it, so to speak, in possession still. What then is the character of the attack so vigorously carried on at the present time against its credibility ?

In the present century the attack, though the same in principle, has changed in position and in form. It is the whole of Revelation which is now attacked, not only as in the 18th century its more advanced positions. Hence the distinction then made between 'natural' and 'revealed' religion, which never could be very definite, is not needed now. Bishop Butler proved, once for all, that the Christian creed cannot be consistently denied by those who receive the primary truths of natural religion. And the deniers of

direct revelation have been driven by his victory to deny the whole. Deism being untenable, atheism, in one form or another, is the only logical resort of the denier. And this new form of the old controversy has been very fruitful of instruction to thoughtful students of the Faith. It has driven them on to see that God's revelation of Himself to men, began with the "light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." That though made at different times, in divers manners, in very different measures, it yet forms one vast, inseparable whole, consistent in itself, however inconsistently held by those who receive it in part alone, or who have tried to complete it by their own additions.

Now this new position of the controversy has considerable advantages for us. It gives to our religion a solidarity which brings the strength of the whole to bear on every part; whilst the evidence proper to each part strengthens all the rest. But the true effect of this change of attack and defence has been mistaken by many of our opponents, and by many of those whose minds are troubled by them. The former seem to think it is Revelation which is defeated; for now they say, "disprove one part and the whole must go together." But the real result is, that if the special evidence for one great Christian fact were disproved, it would still have so much reasonable probability attaching to it, as may accrue from the fact of its natural and almost necessary connection with the whole, and with all those other parts the evidence for which remains untouched.

It is as though our army were defending a long chain of forts, and the enemy first tried to isolate those most advanced and so to destroy them: but being foiled in this,—the connection between these and our base being

too strong to be broken,—should turn their arms against that base. And because the conflict is still waged as earnestly as ever, believers grow discouraged, and begin to fear they are fighting a losing battle; as though to be attacked were the same as to be defeated. “For while “it is easy to estimate the whole value of forces from a “distant and quiet vantage ground, all that is seen “through the dimness and mist of the struggle appears “gigantic and alarming. Yet even at first sight we must “acknowledge, that the past victories of faith cannot but “inspire us with confidence in entering on that struggle to “which we are called, and furnish us with those lessons of “experience which may free us from some natural fears*.”

Taking courage then to survey calmly the attacks made, I think the first characteristic which strikes *us* is the irrelevancy of many of them. For example, many of those who flood the pages of our popular literature with these attacks, seem to account it enough to find almost any objection against almost any portion of revelation, and when they have established a difficulty, imagining they have made the whole uncertain, call on us, in vain, to surrender at discretion. Some even consider it enough to show that the relations between God and ourselves which are revealed in the Bible, are not discoverable from the physical phenomena of our organisms, or by the unaided light of human reason; as though a Divine Revelation were only credible, on the condition that it reveals nothing which we could not have discovered without it. Others again satisfy themselves by showing there are numberless questions arising out of our Revelation, on which we receive from it little or no light at all.

* *Gospel of the Resurrection*. Notice to the 3rd edition, page x. Canon Westcott.

And many, even of the scientific and philosophic opponents of our Revelation, seem to suppose it is enough to bring some possible (often purely hypothetical) explanation of the present condition of the Cosmos, or of men; such as materialism, or evolution, or Comtism, or Necessarianism; and then,—without asking which of the two accounts, their own or that in the Scripture, best agrees with the whole mass of the facts that have to be explained;—without even asking how far the new explanation consists with, or contradicts and so excludes the revealed account;—it is assumed they are entitled to reject the whole of Revelation and to say that science has in fact cleared Christianity out of the way. These are obviously very unscientific ways of dealing with the subject. Every trained reasoner knows very well, that a comparatively small amount of reliable positive evidence for a fact, will establish it against a very considerable amount of difficulty, *à priori* improbability, or negative evidence. For when we are arguing from positive evidence we are arguing from what we know: but when we are arguing from difficulties, and still more when we are arguing from negative evidence, we are chiefly arguing from what we do not know. A great and real difficulty cannot destroy one iota of the evidence we have for any given event or fact: its presence shows there is something in the matter as yet unknown to us; which were it known might alter our judgement of its significance though not of its reality. The difficulty may be so great as to call for suspension of judgement even as to its reality; certainly not for denial. But no one can be called on to rebut purely negative evidence: there are many cases in which it would require Omniscience to know that a given event has *not* occurred; all we can do is to ask what

evidence there is that it has happened*. The distinction is a most important one in dealing with our present subject, and it is necessary you should fully consider and master it, so that you may enter upon this inquiry with an absolute and immoveable conviction that the possibilities of the Cosmos are neither co-ordinate with nor limited by the extent of our information, or the capacity of our comprehensions.

A second characteristic of modern popular scepticism (for we are not now dealing with genuine scientific or critical difficulties) is its vagueness. It is this which chiefly makes it alarming. "So long as doubts and "difficulties are but hinted at in general terms, they "spread through society and unsettle the faith of many. "It is only when some genuine thinker gives reasons "for his want of faith, that the validity of his objections "can be brought to the test of examination†." As doubts of a friend, once suggested, will if not boldly investigated grow in our minds poisoning all she does or says, so it is here. We must distinctly face the suggested doubt, state it to ourselves in a definite proposition, and try one by one the grounds on which it stands, before we seek a definite

* We may take as an example of this fundamental distinction of practical logic the rules of evidence adopted in our courts of law, e.g. it is supposed that a murder has been committed and *B* is charged with the crime. That the victim is not to be found, is negative evidence and is thrown aside: the body must be produced and the cause of death ascertained. That medical skill can discover no natural cause, will not prove the death to be unnatural. And the crime must be brought home to *B* by positive evidence: in default of this he cannot be called on to prove he did not commit it. And if there is sufficient credible evidence that he was seen by *C*, *D* and *E* to commit it, it is no use to bring 100 people who did not see him, merely because it is possible or probable they might have seen it.

† "Science, Testimony and Miracles." *Contemp. Review*, Feb. 1876.

answer. Modern scepticism owes much of its exaggerated dimensions to vagueness of statement.

There is another vagueness which helps it to spread: it is vagueness of method; you will meet with it continually. The doubter raises an objection to one point, let us say to the credibility of miracles: listens to part of the answer, and without much weighing it, goes off instead to a second—perhaps the impossibility of demonstrating the existence of God: treats that in the same undecided way, and flies off to a third—as the authenticity of the Gospels; and so on and on; ending with a painful sense of the insufficiency of the answers, the uncertainty attaching to each question, and the hopelessness of coming to a decision. This way of dealing with difficulties may often arise from diffidence as to the questioner's own power of deciding; but it is clear it makes any sound decision impossible. It is absolutely necessary, would we know what these doubts are worth as against Revelation, to take them one by one, and try to finish with one, yes or no, before taking up another. If then we cannot decide, we must dismiss that point altogether; for as we do not know on which side the truth lies we are bound not to judge.

The amount of vagueness of thought and language disclosed by this controversy is a still more disheartening characteristic, for it is manifested by educated writers, and even by scientific critics. It amounts to an apparent forgetfulness that truths are true wherever they were first known; and that facts are facts, by whatever name they are called. For example, 'Origin' is a great stumbling-block now. You mention some doctrine of the Scripture, which you think throws light on the difficulty you are discussing; and it is set aside at once with an "oh that

“came from Egypt”—or “from India.” What has that to do with the question, whether it came from God? Was He bound to give no light to Egyptians or to Hindoos? or was it beyond His power to give the same light, at the same time, to more than one race of men? Another example we find in the force attributed to the word ‘Anthropomorphism’: when that word is uttered, the question is supposed to be decided; what is anthropomorphic in religion must be false*. The suppressed argument appears to be a circular one: but as regards our Revelation it does but beg the question. If it is true that God made man in His own Image, then however partial and incomplete that image may be,—the converse, that there is that in man which reveals to us something of God, is true also: and if it pleases any English writer to call such an inference ‘anthropomorphic,’ it does not alter the fact one way or the other.

Again, a great portion of modern popular Scepticism is traceable to nothing else than the quite unexpected amount of ignorance and credulity† existing in the educated and writing public. It is specially marked on three subjects:

* Anthropomorphite was originally the name of some sects, among Mahomedans as well as Christians, who, importing the old heathen notions into their new faith, contended that the Deity has a body of human shape. In its modern use it is a term of reproach, not only to those who attribute to God the evil and exaggerated passions of men; but to those who believe that the human mind and spirit were created in some respects after the similitude of God.

† The words sceptic, scepticism are themselves confusing here. Our opponents deny Revelation, because they believe some other philosophy or account of the Cosmos to be true. We are as sceptical of their accounts as they are of ours: each party thinks the other at once too credulous and too sceptical, because each holds that the other believes and doubts in the wrong place.

1. Ignorance of the past history of Christianity.
2. Ignorance of what our Revelation teaches.
3. Ignorance of what evidence is.

1st. To one who gathered his ideas of the history of the Christian Church from our sceptical literature, it would appear that it took its rise in an utterly obscure and unhistorical age; that its creed and literature grew up in Palestine, Greece and Rome in a manner similar to the Scandinavian myths, and that there are no authentic records of what Christians believed till about the third or fourth century. That these vague traditions took hold of and grew up in people's minds, because they were ignorant, credulous, and superstitious. That since then it has kept its hold through a peculiar force, vaguely called 'priestcraft'; that now at last true science and capable criticism have been applied to it, and it is overthrown. I need not say that every one of these clauses is untrue: they are the exact reverse of the truth.

In dealing with secular history, the age of the Cæsars is not accounted an unhistorical period; nor are myths generally supposed to flourish when many can write and more can read. From the first the faith of Christ had to force its way through the dearest prejudices, the strongest superstitions, the rooted beliefs and habits of the races to whom it was offered, into reluctant hearts and unaccustomed heads, to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. From the first it grew in the fierce light of persecution; hostile criticism without and divers heresies within, drove Christians early to search into the grounds of their faith, and to define its doctrines clearly. Few generations have passed since then, without witnessing renewed attacks on the credibility of our Revelation. What a sea of doubts the Confessions of St Augustine

disclose; how fierce and how subtle were the attacks of the Arians. So again in the days of St Bernard, and again in the Renaissance. The English Deists, the French Encyclopædists all fought in the same battle, and each in turn thought they had conquered. What University, what College, now dreams of recommending their writings to its students, as examples of victorious logic or of legitimate investigation? The lasting historic result of these attacks has been, to spread the faith of Christ; to drive Christians to search more earnestly into the treasure-house of Revelation; to compel them to clear away human misconceptions of its facts and doctrines, to force them out of their own narrow and partial grooves, to establish more strongly its Divine origin. Experience then would lead us to expect its credentials will bear, as they have all along borne, the renewed strain of inquiry; and that this fresh outburst of old doubts in new forms, will again result in the stronger confirmation of the faith, and the fuller understanding of Revelation. Of this at least there can be little doubt; no credulity can well exceed that which would attribute such results as these to 'priestcraft': a bubble that seems to have taken in some minds the place 'witchcraft' used to hold amongst the unintelligible forces of the world.

Then much that is written, and accepted as sufficient against our Revelation, betrays a singular ignorance of what that Revelation teaches. Divines have formed their own theories on various allied questions—e.g. as on the exact mode of inspiration: their disciples have mistaken these opinions for necessary parts of Revelation itself, fearing "if we give up this, we give up all." And sceptics finding these opinions untenable, have not unnaturally concluded that in overthrowing them they have overthrown all. The

moral objections against revelation are often only objections to the human inferences of theologians; as St Augustine found at last his objections had been. "I had barked," he says, "not against Thy truth, but against fictions of carnal men, which I mistook for Thy truth." But the chief cause is, that even the "really eminent men whose influence is thrown into the scale against the Christian Religion, have failed to examine what is said in its behalf, or to show they comprehend and can appreciate the reasons why it commends itself to men, who are not inferior to themselves in any intellectual or moral gift. One cannot read Mill's essay on Nature without feeling that so obvious a misrepresentation of the Christian belief could not have been written by any one who had seen Bishop Butler's famous sermons on the same subject. Some knowledge," this writer adds, "some knowledge of both sides is necessary to pronounce judgement in any controversy. Many objections brought against Christianity it is not necessary to answer at all. It is sufficient to show the statement on which the objection is founded may be admitted, without weakening in the least the cause against which it has been directed." Why, for instance, should it trouble us to be told that God is undiscoverable by human reason? It would be a grave difficulty against a religion of pure rationalism, which taught that reason can discover God and that men can comprehend Him. It might possibly—I do not know that it would—be a serious difficulty to the Theist. But we have already learnt, that "touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out." "That no one knoweth Who the Son is, but the Father; and Who the Father is but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." That this will not satisfy the claims of Agnostics to know nothing is true: but the first

thing to be done in any argument is to ascertain how far and on what points we agree.

But the greatest and most prevailing ignorance at the present moment seems to be the ignorance of what constitutes evidence, what are its rules, and what kind and amount of proof we ought to demand before we affirm or deny. Thus much scepticism is due to the adoption of false tests of truth. The actual test in vogue now amounts to this, Is it stated by a scientific man? So we constantly find what a physicist has thrown out as a just possible hypothesis, accepted with eager credulity as though it were a demonstrated law of nature: and we continually find the rules of historical testimony, and the facts of moral consciousness set aside as worthless, if they do not at the first glance coincide with the last new hypothesis of a physicist. But the business of an hypothesis, and indeed of a theory, is to prove itself conformable to facts all round. If after due trial it contradicts any facts, it proves itself, not the facts, wrong.

Again it is evidently a false test of truth, when men assume that if revelation were true, it would on all points coincide with the present conclusions of human science. Now I believe we shall find that there is not one demonstrated law of nature that conflicts with our Revelation: but in truth there are so very few established "laws of nature," beyond the limits of mathematical and mechanical science, that conflict of this kind is as yet impossible. But if our Revelation entirely coincided, on the very few points on which it touches natural science, with the theories and conclusions of the phenomenal sciences of the present day, then it is morally probable it could not coincide with scientific opinion twenty years hence. Nay, had it agreed

with the opinions expressed by scientific men at the Belfast meeting of the British Association in 1874, it must have conflicted with several of those expressed at the Glasgow meeting in 1876. A declaration of faith signed by 718 students of the natural sciences in 1864*, expresses very fairly the spirit in which this inquiry should be pursued. Is it not the spirit of common sense? "We "conceive it to be impossible that the word of God written "in the book of nature and the words of God written in "Holy Scripture should contradict one another. Physical "science is not complete: it is the duty of every student "to investigate nature simply to discover truth: if his "conclusions appear to contradict the written word (or "rather his interpretation of that word, which may be "erroneous), he should not presumptuously affirm his "conclusion to be right, and the statement of Scripture "to be wrong, but rather leave the two side by side, till it "shall please God to allow us to see the manner in which "they are reconciled. And instead of insisting on the "seeming differences between science and Scripture, it "would be as well to rest in faith upon the points on "which they agree."

Then tests have been applied to the statements of Revelation, which no one would venture to apply to the narrower and easier investigations of natural science. We shall find for example that several of the objections urged, on *à priori* grounds against our knowledge of God's Existence, are such as would be equally fatal to our knowing anything whatever: if admitted they prove too much, and therefore have no real weight. Another test, applied exclusively to Revelation, is met with in the assumption that if revelation were true it would be all clear, offering

* Sixty-four of these being Professors or Lecturers.

no difficulty, leaving nothing within its domain incomprehensible. But this is to ignore at once the constitution of our minds, the express statements of Scripture, and all experience.

For our minds are constituted to grow in knowledge, step by step; and that only by the strenuous and continuous exercise of our faculties: whatever truth lies beyond our present knowledge is, or will be when we approach it, a difficulty to us. To say that our progress in knowledge must be gradual, is therefore to say that it must be encompassed with difficulties. If then He Who made our minds to learn by active exertion rather than by passive reception, were pleased to make any revelation to us of matters beyond our own observation, we ought to expect He would make it in a manner calculated to exercise our minds and promote their growth; or, in other words, that His revelation to us would be correlated to the minds He has given us. And so our divine Revelation is. "I have many "things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." There are simple first principles in Christian truth that a child can receive. There are higher and more difficult sequences, that demand the study of the highest intellects. There are some truths, of which the best scholar in Christ's school—getting a glimpse—can only trust he will know them hereafter.

It is very plausible to say the object of a revelation is to reveal, not to present us with difficulties. This Revelation is adapted to the imperfections of our minds; and one of the chief of these is, they can never rest long in truth comprehended: our hearts can; our intellects demand new difficulties to master, further truths to grasp. It can be no objection to its Divine Origin, that it meets both these demands: that in it truths are unfolded in the contempla-

tion of which our spirits can rest in adoring satisfaction : truths unfolding, in search after which our minds may climb, and grow by climbing for ever.

A similar fallacy runs through several of the moral objections raised against either the apparent or the revealed moral Government of the world. The suppressed premiss in most at least of these arguments is "if this were just I should see it to be just." And that assumes

i. That I know all the purposes for which the world ought to be governed.

ii. That I know all the conditions under which those purposes have to be accomplished.

iii. That I am in a position to judge what methods for their accomplishment are necessary, and therefore good, and which are needless and therefore cruel.

For unless we know all this we are acting in a most unscientific manner if we pretend to judge. It is very true that some theologians have been very eager to find out what God's final ends with mankind are : and that some of the ends they have fixed on are not just or good. But it is impossible for us, with our very limited knowledge of what human capacities are, to know these future purposes unless God revealed them to us. And in His present Revelation only so much of them is told us as is necessary for the direction of our present efforts. "This is the will of God—even your sanctification : " surely we can see this is a good and just and loving end ; and it may well be enough for us in this life to be fellow workers with God for its accomplishment, in ourselves and in the world.

It would be impossible to enumerate all those attacks on the validity of our faith, which are of this fallacious character. But these samples may perhaps suffice to assure

us that much of the present attack is superficial and powerless; at any rate that the apparent bulk of modern scepticism greatly exceeds its real weight.

What then is the position of inquirers, who wishing to believe, wish still more to be honest?

There is one position offered you which is utterly dishonest. It is the compromise, that Christianity though objectively false, may still be held subjectively as though it were true. It is put in something like this way. "Though modern science and criticism has overthrown the objective facts of revelation, it has only sent religion back to the domain of sentiment and emotion. On these subjective grounds, and on these alone, it may still be maintained, and usefully influence men." Whether there be any truth at all in the first—certainly premature—assertion, we shall have to ask another time. But never for a moment admit such a falsehood, as that which would make religious truths questions not of fact but of sentiment. The strength of religion lies in the absolute reality of its objective facts: Revelation is a discovery to us of our actually existing relations, manifested and incarnated in a series of historical and of present facts. Its subjective truths follow from and spring out of these, and have, and ought to have no power at all over us unless these are real. Emotions based on recognized fictions tend not to nobility but to hypocrisy of soul.

We must face this fully. The fearful moral and spiritual loss involved in the loss of Christian faith, is no doubt a weighty presumption for its truth; but if it were proved to be false, it is a loss we must submit to endure.

How can any moral person say "If I had a Father God caring for my spiritual progress, I know that praying to Him for help and guidance would be a real means of raising

me above myself: therefore though now I am told I have none, I will still make believe and pray*."

How can I live as one redeemed from the power of my sinful habits by Christ, if in fact there is no Christ, and no redemption—and no sin? How can I say, if the Holy Spirit were striving in me to sanctify me, I should be able to strive, following His guidance. Therefore now, though they tell me nothing stirs within my soul or influences my will but inherited associations, or present brain currents, or nerve vibrations over which I have no control; yet by fancying God is influencing me, my evil habits will be broken and my affections roused and purified; I will therefore keep on fancying this.

No; God Who is perfect Truth and Who made us in His own Image, truth seekers, has in His mercy so made us, that it is not possible for us to feed our hearts on what we know, or suspect to be false, or to fortify our moral emotions with lies. It would be a breach of the laws of human nature, could we thus get rid of the facts revealed to us in Christ concerning our relations to God, and yet retain the spiritual and moral consequences of those facts. The notion that we can get rid of them by calling them dogmas or doctrines, is just one of those confusions of words and thoughts, to which so much of scepticism is due. If these relations are facts, how can we get rid of them? If they are not facts, we cannot be benefitted by them, because they do not exist, they never take place.

The validity of our denials, as of our beliefs, depends on whether the things denied are real or unreal. And to ascertain this we must first know what they are, and then see on what evidence they stand.

But here comes in a very practical difficulty. "I am

* See *Life of Harriet Martineau*.

"not able to investigate the scientific or the literary evidence against Revelation. If I tried to judge for myself in this controversy I could not accept my own conclusion, against that of well known men of science, thinkers, and critics, who have come to the conclusion that 'Revelation does not give a credible account of the events it records;' and therefore I must continue to doubt."

Note here that this position forbids denial of any portion of revelation: and suspended judgement, in a matter of such practical importance as this, is a position in which no one can long rest. What is generally done in such a case is, I fear, to read over, without weighing, whatever is written against revelation, in the despairing desire "to know the worst that can be said;" and not to read, still less to study, what equally able men are writing for revelation.

This line of conduct cannot be described as an intellectually honest one. The true course in such a case is to lay aside, for a time, all consideration of these difficulties and questioned statements of revelation, on which the mind has in fact become morbid; and to apply with all diligence to the study and yet more to the practice of those simpler truths, which you still believe to be at least probably true. Then you will, in time, find out the truth of our Saviour's words, they that do His will "shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

But you are not thus morbid; you wish to be armed against the doubts you do not love, and you cannot rely on your own uninstructed judgement. How would you act if the matter were a secular one?

I feel very strongly that in matters of opinion, not as yet become to us distinctly matters of daily and hourly experience, and parts of our very life; we who are not

learned or able must take our opinions and guide our practice by the conclusions and counsels of the better instructed and more capable. We must be, and in fact we are, guided through life mainly by the authority of those we believe to be qualified to judge on that special subject. But we do not choose these guides blindly, nor follow every one who offers to teach us.

And here at first starting we must throw aside the fallacy, so commonly used to increase doubts, that "the great body of scientific men and the whole spirit of modern criticism reject the Christian Revelation." The great body of instructed and able men, acknowledged leaders of thought and science, contains at least as many believers as deniers. Count man for man, weigh power of intellect and width of study on both sides, and we should I believe be led, if we are to choose our guides by number and knowledge of the subject, to faith in Christianity, rather than to faith in materialism, Comtism, or Agnosticism*.

But if we examine more closely the ranks of the opponents, we shall find one feature very common amongst them, though not universal. It is their specialism, which in its present extreme state is quite a modern circumstance. In the quiet days of old, of Pascal or even of Newton, it was quite possible for a man to make himself a master a good way round the circle of human knowledge. Now the sciences have gone too far, and he who would make himself a master of one group of science, must renounce the attempt to be a master in any of the other groups. And not having mastered them, he cannot judge for himself of the conclusions arrived at in groups apart from his own, and requiring methods of investigation

* See note A.

in the use of which he is not skilled ; if he be an educated man, he will not try. "The reason why we esteem "individual professors so highly, is precisely because they "have developed their knowledge in a certain one-sided "direction. The great error which keeps its hold even "on many educated men, is their not realizing to themselves how impossible it is for one man to master the "sum total of all the details even of the natural sciences*."

Before we accept any one as an authority then, we must ask some questions.

i. He is now giving an opinion on such, or such a subject: has he made this specific subject his own? Then if the subject is his own we must ask,

ii. How does he deal with his theories? The sound scientific teacher "has a very firm grasp of his facts and "a very loose hold on his theories:" and I would add a very firm grasp of his words, not suffering those slippery things to slip from one meaning to another. Above all, does he show himself well aware of his own ignorance? This is a very accurate and delicate test. There is a tone of certainty, of almost contemptuous confidence, that often marks the dicta of a specialist when he has unawares glided off his own subject and on to another. Before that gliding you got from him lucidly stated facts, exact arguments, measured inferences, and a clear consciousness of the limits of his knowledge; now you get positive assertions, sweeping conclusions, and words used in several senses. When you notice this change leave him†.

* *Freedom of Science in the Modern State*, by Rudolph Virchow.

† One instance of this will be found in the inaugural address of Prof. Tyndal, of 1877, at Birmingham. "We go along with him while he shows "us the parts of which man is made up, and the mechanical and vital "laws to which he cannot refuse obedience. But as to anything beyond

And generally, we must take men as authorities on their own subject only. The sciences they pursue, if real sciences, are partial revelations to us of God's works. The Astronomer then is a guide we shall do well to listen to, in respect to some part of the first of Genesis. The Geologist and the Physiologist have a right to be heard on other portions. They have no authority at all as to that part which tells of man's "becoming a living soul" and being "made in the image of God." Any authoritative opinion given by them on these subjects, would tend only to discredit their judgement throughout.

There is another reason for this limitation of authority. It is that steady application to one group of sciences, and to the use of its appropriate method of investigation, so far from helping a man to judge in another group, is more often a positive disqualification; so apt is it to lead him to apply his own methods of investigation, to inquiries in which they are useless. For example: the man of arithmetic, taking up an ancient historical record, declares

"this—as to the dominant influence of society on the individuals who make it up, the complex laws of heredity, and all else of this kind necessary for his purpose, he talks to us in a very different tone from that he had been using previously....Has he not made a jump, and carried us with him over an abyss he has not yet sounded, and into a country he has somewhat imperfectly explored? Some may trust him still—but some will be more exacting, and will complain that the last words of science are so strangely unlike the first, and that exact proof has not been given at the point when exact proof seemed most necessary. When Prof. Tyndal can show us intermediate laws as clear and certain as those which hold good in the domain of physical nature, and connecting that domain with the intellectual and moral life of man, we shall be extremely glad to listen to him, and to draw the conclusions which the new science warrants. But we may decline to go with him in anticipating the course of discovery, and may fairly ask him by what right he asserts what he does not prove."

Times, Oct. 2, 1877.

it to be a forgery because its sums will not work, and figures at least give certain data. On the other hand, the trained student of history tells us, "if this document were a forgery it is all but morally impossible that its sums should not work." So we take the arithmetician as our authority for the sums, and the historian as our guide to the inference, and conclude, that whatever else the document may be, it is not a forgery, and that arithmetical accuracy is no real test of the general truthfulness and credibility of an historian.

If then in judging of the credibility of revelation we decide to be guided by authority, both common sense and honesty require us to pay a proportionate attention to those, who being educated men have devoted their minds to the study of its records, and their lives to the practice of its spiritual precepts; and who have thus come, individually and collectively, to a growing conviction of the transcendent reality of its facts, and the authenticity of its records. To neglect these in order to listen to those who have judged of its credibility from its coincidence with the results of other sciences, or who have studied it to criticise not to practise, is to deal with it in a manner we never dream of following in secular matters. There is no sounder rule of honest criticism than this, that to judge fairly of any system or any book, we must have studied it with an honest desire to find out all that is best and truest in it: or that we must take the account of it given us by those who believe in it, not the report of those who dislike and deny it.

I am told that it is said, that the authority of those instructed men whose profession is the ministry, is not to be taken into this account: it is paid advocacy, and not disinterested. This is a truly ingenious way of putting

out of court all those who having from full conviction devoted their lives to the Christian ministry, and to the study of its Revelations, must be presumed to know what it is, and what are its evidences the best. But if this rule be a sound one, it is equally applicable to authorities on other subjects. We must no longer ask a medical man's opinion as to the value or risk of vaccination, because he is paid to vaccinate. We must not consult the Judges as to the justice of our laws, because they are paid for administering them. And whilst the Christian ministry is almost the least remunerative profession a man of real ability can adopt; the bold assertion of infidelity is now the easiest path a scientific or literary man can take to rise to that popular preeminence which sells his writings and crowds his lecture rooms. Indeed as in Bishop Butler's days we read, that "to speak slightly of Revelation is as necessary to the character of a gentleman as fine clothes and good breeding;" so now it seems almost as needful for those who aspire to the character of men of culture and leading in society. Those who are themselves in earnest will be no more inclined to suspect such motives in the opinions of a Huxley, a Tyndal, a Clifford, or a Darwin, than in the judgement of a Maurice, or a Liddon or a Conder, in the scholarship of a Pusey or Thirlwall, in the critical ability of a Lightfoot or a Westcott. The imputation of interested bias on the one or the other side, is always unjust, since it can neither be proved or disproved, and it must always bring discredit on the side that imputes it.

To sum up then what we have already arrived at. The questions raised by the modern attack on the credibility of our Revelation, are in substance these.

1. In what relations do we stand to the Cause of our

being? and what moral and spiritual hopes can we have from their fulfilment?

2. How is the present condition of men, physically, morally and spiritually to be accounted for? How did it come to be what it actually is? What hope is there of its improvement, and by what means?

On the one hand we have the account of these things given to us by our Divine Revelation: on the other side are the various accounts given by those human philosophies which oppose themselves alike to this, and to each other. Neither give us a complete account, and both sides are accompanied by great difficulties. While we know only in part, there must be difficulties: in truth a revelation that had nothing in it beyond our present comprehension must needs be so superficial, that it would be morally incredible it could come to us from a God such as we believe in.

But these difficulties are not all on one side. If Revelation has its difficulties; Scepticism, with the great fact of Christianity, and all its evidences, and its results to account for, has its difficulties. If Revelation makes great demands on our faith, Scepticism in its threefold forms, materialism, agnosticism, secularism, makes quite enormous demands on our credulity. If Scepticism can boast of its great scientific leaders, Christianity has a still longer list of great thinkers and clear-sighted students in every field of human research. No one will deny that many honest believers have spoken unwisely for God: but it is certain that Scepticism is at present overburdened with its ignorant, half-educated, credulous and flippant professors.

In the present state of our ignorance, difficulties however formidable tell nothing against facts for which we

have a reasonable amount of appropriate positive evidence. "The value of Science," says Prof. Jevons, "is very high, while its conclusions are kept well within the limits of the data on which they are founded. But our experience is of the most limited character compared with that we have to learn: while our mental powers seem to fall infinitely short of the task of comprehending and explaining fully the nature of any one object. I draw the conclusion that we must interpret the results of science in an affirmative sense only. Ours must be a truly positive philosophy, not that false negative philosophy, which building on a few material facts, presumes to assert it has compassed the bounds of existence, while it nevertheless ignores the most unquestionable phenomena of the human mind and feelings*."

It is then the positive evidence concerning our Divine Revelation which we have to consider, and to which alone we can attach any importance.

* Prof. Jevons, *Principles of Science*, Vol. I. Preface, p. ix.

LECTURE II.

OF EVIDENCE AND ITS FOUNDATION.

"Now Faith is the ground of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

WE have come, you will remember, to the conclusion that the evidence we must seek for in our present inquiry is positive evidence. The question on which the controversy must turn is not how can we answer the difficulties and objections raised against Revelation; it is what evidence have we for its truth, and is that evidence sufficient? For as no amount of negative evidence, not even the absence of all difficulties, would warrant our assertion of its truth; so neither can their presence justify our rejection, if there is adequate positive evidence for it.

We have then to day to ask, what is the kind and what the amount of evidence which we ought to demand for the facts and the conclusions of Revelation. And in examining these, we must strictly observe the rules of evidence: we must ask for that kind of evidence the subject admits of; for that amount of evidence which on such matters it is possible to have. We must not receive arguments for the statements of our Revelation, which would not be admissible as historical, logical or moral proof in parallel secular matters; neither arguments against them which would be fatal to all knowledge of the same class.

But a further question is raised here by the materialism of the present day, which affirms, "that we have no grounds of conviction except those which we reach through the senses." And this will make it necessary to analyze the basis of all human knowledge, and to ascertain what are the grounds of those convictions which we are said to "reach through the senses." Then I think we shall find that the distinction sought to be drawn has no existence in reality, and that the assertion if admitted would be at least as fatal to physical, as to moral and religious knowledge.

I fear the inquiry will be tedious and complex, requiring close attention. But we must take point by point in order, and first ask what is evidence, before inquiring on what assumptions it is based.

For all our knowledge of things without us and within us, is built up on evidence: nor can the degree of certainty with which we know any fact, be greater than the sum total of the evidence we have for it.

And evidence is of two kinds:

- i. The evidence of experience: this we obtain either
 - a. directly from our own consciousness whether present or remembered,
 - or b. indirectly through the testimony of others.
- ii. The evidence of inference or reasoning.

In all except the very simplest particular propositions we require both kinds of evidence. Observation, our own or that of others, collects the facts; inference tells us what they prove or teach. To ascertain facts, to draw inferences from them, and to apply these inferences to the guidance of our conduct and conversation, is the constant occupation of our lives. The only difference between scientific laws, and the empirical rules we all follow in

little matters; the only difference between historical knowledge and the current gossip of the town, is that in science and scientific history this process of observing and inferring is carried out carefully, on accurate and sufficient data, with accurately used words and measured inferences: and in gossip it is carried on carelessly, on insufficient data, with inexact words and inconclusive reasoning.

Clearly in our inquiry it is this exact or scientific evidence we want. And therefore it is essential to understand what scientific evidence on this class of subjects really is. I take Mr Stuart Mill's account of it; not that he gives a sufficient analysis of the foundation of proof, but that his account of the processes of proof is very clear; and that he was certainly in no way biassed by any unconscious desire to strengthen the proofs of religious truths.

"All science," he tells us, "consists of data and conclusions from those data, of proofs and what they prove." Logic is the science which teaches us when an inference is justly drawn from the known facts, and rightly applied as a guide to unknown facts. And these inferences are of three kinds:

- i. From known particulars to unknown particulars.
- ii. From known particulars to unknown generals; this is induction.
- iii. From known or assumed generals to unknown particulars; this is deduction or ratiocination*.

Let us take induction first.

* E.g. i. Lunar halo followed by rain on such and such days: therefore will be followed by rain tomorrow.

ii. Lunar halo has been followed by rain 19 times out of 20: therefore will generally be followed by rain.

iii. Lunar halo is generally followed by rain: therefore the halo tonight will probably be followed by rain tomorrow.

We collect from experience a number of events, or phenomena, which all agree in having two or more particulars in common. We classify them by that common feature, and sum up our experience of that agreement in a general proposition or law; affirming that whenever and wherever these phenomena recur under the same circumstances, they will possess that common feature or relation.

"Now this conclusion embraces more than was contained in the individual instances from which we infer it; for to those individual facts we add the assertion, that we are convinced what we found true in each one of those, is true in an indefinite number of instances which we have not examined. Thus in every induction we proceed from truths we do know to infer truths we do not know: from facts certified by observation, to facts not observed, and even to future facts." "Observation," he adds, "gives only the individual facts; and these are all the evidence we have or can have for any induction. And we may, and often do, infer from individual instances to individual instances without any generalization. General propositions are merely the registers of such inferences and short formula for making further inferences: and the conclusion we draw from this register is really a conclusion from the forgotten individual facts." They are essential when the facts are many and complicated, on account of the insufficiency of our minds to attend to and compare so many individual instances at once. And Mill quietly adds, "We conclude from known instances to unknown, by an impulse of the generalizing faculty."

You will observe then that the general proposition, or law, adds nothing to the certainty of the inference. All it includes, beyond the individual facts it registers, being a conviction of our own minds, that what has been found

true in some, will be found true in all like cases. The grounds of this conviction we shall consider presently; now I only ask you to note:

i. That all inductive science is built up on the assumption, that this subjective conviction is objectively true.

ii. That this conviction is not arrived at through the senses; the senses never giving us more than individual phenomena.

iii. That its truth can never be demonstrated.

iv. That if this conviction is legitimate and trustworthy in secular sciences, it is equally legitimate in religious inquiries.

v. Lastly, if it is not legitimate, then, whatever be the case with revealed religion, not only natural religion, but all science, physical, biological, or moral, is impossible.

Now we turn to the deductive process. Observation can give us only individual facts, and hence all knowledges are inductive in their origin. "But," Mill goes on, "our knowledge may come to us from testimony, accepted by us as authoritative on the matter before us.

"And this testimony may be

"i. of individual facts

"ii. of general propositions, or

"iii. of both: as when we accept a scientific doctrine "on the authority of a scientific man, or a theological "doctrine on the authority of Scripture. The original "data here are general propositions, the fruit of prior inductions: and the process consists in determining whether "the special instance we are asking about is one of those "included in the general proposition; whether it has the "marks by which our authority has signified that the "cases the general proposition applies to are to be known. "Thus a chain of reasoning consists in adding the con-

"clusion of one induction to another, and recognizing the individual case by its marks as one brought under the general proposition, e.g.:

"Induction has found that a is a mark of b
 that b is a mark of c
 that c is a mark of e
 that e is a mark of f .*

"Whence adding these separate conclusions together we determine deductively, that therefore a is a mark of f .

"Now this is based on the assumption, that whatever has a mark, has that which it is a mark of." This is precisely the same assumption that we had before in induction: i.e. "that what has been found true in some will be found true in all like cases": only it is put into another form to suit the deductive process.

"Hence the method of all deductive sciences is hypothetical. They proceed by tracing the consequences of certain general principles or alleged facts, leaving for separate consideration whether those principles or facts are true or not, or if not exactly true whether they are sufficiently near the truth. This may require in every different case different evidence, giving rise to every degree of difficulty, and varying from demonstration to the slightest probability. But the deductive part of the process,—the determining what inferences may be drawn, or what conclusions follow from those assumptions—this may be done once for all, and the results held ready as

* E.g. In this watch we find certain means, adapted to a definite end. But the adaptation of means to a specific end, is a mark of choice. Choice is a mark of comparison and judgement having been exercised. Comparison and judgement are marks of conscious thought. Conscious thought is a mark of a living being.

Therefore this watch is a mark that a living being has been at work in its construction.

"fresh cases arise and press for decision. This is what "is called demonstration, because it is to a great degree "free from risk of error."

The amount of proof then is just the same, whether we proceed first inductively and then verify deductively; or whether we begin deductively, starting from some general proposition or law, and then verify inductively: that is by *à priori* reasoning ascertain what the consequences of our assumed law would be, under such and such circumstances; and then compare this calculated result with the actual result in each individual case we meet with. The certainty of the conclusion is equal; which of the two methods is the proper one to employ, depends on the nature of our subject, or on the stage at which our investigation has arrived. All sciences when far advanced become deductive. But all moral sciences, Mill tells us, must be pursued deductively from the first.

And thus our Divine Revelation must be studied deductively in all its domains. We receive its declarations on authority: we verify their truth by applying them to all our spiritual needs, our individual experience in all the circumstances and conditions of our personal lives, the lives of others, and the historical life of Christ's church and kingdom.

We can only test their truth in this manner: to deal with such a subject inductively, is to set science at defiance. And in deductive sciences, when an individual instance does not at once appear to respond to the general principle, the cause of failure must be looked for in the presence of some counteracting cause which we may have overlooked; in misinterpretation of the true marks, or failure in rightly applying them, &c. And not till all these sources of error are eliminated, does the scientific student

go back to his general law, and ask, what is wrong there?

Well then, there is no difference whatever in the method of investigation and proof between secular and religious, physical and moral knowledge. Is there any difference in the subject matter, in the data of moral and religious knowledge, which makes it less possible to arrive at certainty in these, than in physical sciences? Our opponents say there is; and in truth the whole controversy seems now to turn on this question.

Hence our next inquiry must be, what are the different subject matters of our various sciences? And what is the degree of certainty attainable in each respectively?

In this one respect all subjects of human knowledge are identical; they are wholly limited to a knowledge of relations*. And our knowledge of any subject is complete when we know—or rather it would be complete if we did know—what all its relations are and what they are not.

Now our knowledge of relations falls into four great divisions or hierarchies†.

I. Mathematical Sciences, dealing with the relations of quantities and extensions, of time and space.

II. Physical Sciences, investigating the relations or properties of matter, inorganic and organic.

III. Moral Sciences, investigating the relations of mind, reason and conscience, and of men as endowed with these.

* This limitation is sometimes stated differently: it is said our knowledge is of properties not of substances. It is the same fact less accurately stated: the relation between a magnet and a needle is sometimes described as a property of the magnet, sometimes as a property of the needle.

† Quotations chiefly from *Unseen Universe*, and *Church Quarterly Review*; Art. *Unseen Universe*.

IV. Religious Sciences, dealing with the relations that exist between ourselves and our Cosmos, and God*.

Thus each succeeding hierarchy includes the preceding ones in its ascending scope. Let us take each in turn as we consider what are the data, and what the degree of certainty attainable in them.

I. The object of Mathematical Science is, as you well know, to ascertain the relations of quantities, extensions, number and form; to register their marks and to hold the results ready as fresh cases arise and press for decision.

The data are definitions and axioms; the method is deductive. And hence we have here no degrees of certainty, but the conclusion in the most intricate problem is just as certain as in the first and simplest step; the results are true always and under all circumstances within the limits of their data: i.e. we are unable to conceive their being false.

But we must note here that the whole chain of demonstration which leads the mathematician to these results, depends upon the truth of certain axioms, which—whether they be as some say generalizations from experience obtained prior to our present existence, or whether they are seen by us intuitively,—*cannot now be proved by us*: for every proof of them we attempt begins by assuming they are true and cannot be doubted. Two and two make four—because they are four: lines which are equal to the same line are equal to one another because they cannot

* These divisions are never exact: there are always border sciences which combine at least two of them. So Mechanics lie between the first and the second. Language and Psychology include moral and physical phenomena: whilst Ethics, Law, and Sociology can never, we are persuaded, be rightly mastered if divorced from religious relations.

be unequal. Thus the certainty of these most absolutely certain sciences rests on convictions of our own minds, which we find we have, which we cannot prove, and of which we cannot now divest ourselves. What ground have we for trusting them?

Widely different are the data of the phenomenal sciences, whether physical or moral. The subjects of inquiry here are the relations which obtain between phenomena; the object being to ascertain the sequence or order of their occurrence, and to register that order in a general proposition which we call "the law" of their occurrence, and which is very often popularly mistaken for a statement of the cause of their occurrence. The data in all phenomenal sciences are:

- i. The phenomena, or events obtained by observation, our own or that of others.
- ii. The assumption that the same phenomena will uniformly follow the same antecedents under the same conditions.

It is clear there are many more avenues for error open here. But we are so constantly told now of the certainty of the physical sciences and their conclusions, as compared with the uncertainty of moral and religious knowledge, it will be well to take a closer survey of the degrees of certainty attaching to the various stages of its progress, from conjecture to demonstration. The process is something of this kind: the opportunities of error it affords you can mark for yourselves.

We want to ascertain how bodies fall to the ground. The first step is to observe the individual facts accurately: the next to classify them: by doing this we get rid of those phenomena which are special to the individual instances of falling, and which have to be eliminated as

accidental. This process leads us to alter the question, for we find that while some bodies fall, another class, like smoke, gas, &c. rise; and a third as films, down, &c. float. Finding these different actions of each class are uniform in the cases we have observed, we next assume they will be uniform in those cases we have not observed. At present the application of this assumption to the subject before us clearly amounts only to a probability, and the degree of its probability depends on the number and accuracy of our observations.

The next step is to make some guess as to what the true relation between the antecedent position of the body and its sequent fall may be. The first class fall because they have an inherent property of heaviness: the second class rise because they have an inherent property of lightness; and the third float because they have neither. This guess is an hypothesis and we have to set to work to verify it by deduction. If this is the relation, these heavy bodies will always fall, the light bodies rise, the neutral ones float. An exhausted receiver here gives the opportunity of trying a crucial experiment.

An hypothesis then amounts to a possible explanation: and its chief use is to suggest a definite line of investigation, by which we can diminish the number of possible explanations. Thus Kepler made and abandoned nineteen hypotheses respecting the form of the planetary orbits, before he rested on that which has since been corrected and almost demonstrated to be the true one.

When the most probable hypothesis is thus got at, it is tried and tested in as many and as various ways as ingenuity can suggest. Its results in the most diverse cases are first calculated, and verified or disproved as the cases occur: and thus it is altered and corrected, until it

becomes as nearly as possible the exact statement of a common sequence belonging to that whole class of phenomena.

Now it becomes a Theory of the law, or uniform relation which we assert will prevail in every instance that has the marks of that class. Newton's magnificent generalization, known as the law of gravitation, is an instance of such a theory in physical science. As a good hypothesis amounts to a possible explanation, so a sound theory amounts to the probable explanation, but to no more.

The subsequent process of verification is the same in principle as before. The theory, assumed to be true, is used to explain all fresh phenomena falling under it, and to predict future ones. In this way it is again corrected, and when it continues to stand the test both of prolonged experience and of new discoveries, it attains that highest degree of probability which is popularly called a moral certainty.

It is in the power of hastening this stage of verification that the chief advantage of the physical over the moral sciences consists: for they can employ two modes of verification, which cannot be used either in moral or religious investigations.

i. The first is by crucial experiments, contrived to exclude all other possible explanations: or crucial instances may occur, which accurately observed, have the same logical effect. In either case the theory that stands this test becomes what is called a *phenomenal law*: and is held to be true subject to future corrections.

ii. Or "when the data are such that relations of "quantity or extension are included in them, and can "be used as marks of quality; then these being calculated mathematically, and the results being verified in

"whatever direction and extent is possible, the conclusions "become matters of demonstration*." And the theory so verified becomes really a moral certainty, and may take its place among the known "*laws of nature*." The theory that matter is inert, has been we are told thus verified.

This being the highest degree of certainty that the Physical Sciences can attain, in what does it consist? And why do we call it "a moral certainty," when it is obtained by mathematical demonstration?

A mathematical certainty means that the opposite is inconceivable.

A moral certainty—that the opposite is incredible.

In the case before us, of a law of nature, both are combined to give us the result: but the first assures us of the process alone; for the truth of the data we rely on the second. E. g. given a body moving through space with such a velocity and in such a curve, its orbit can be calculated with mathematical certainty: but the fact that this particular comet is moving in that curve with that velocity, depends on the correctness of human observation: this depends on the accuracy of the instruments used, partly also on the physical, mental, and moral qualifications of the observers; and these are to us not matters for mathematical demonstration but for faith. Correct these to the utmost by repetition, still the certainty a "law of nature" can attain is to be measured by the doctrine of chances; and its falsity, though incredible, is not inconceivable or even impossible.

And now let us turn to the process of verification in the study of moral and religious relations. The logical method in these, is that used in all deductive science,

* Thus chemistry promises to become a more certain and accurate science than physiology can ever be, because it admits of both these tests.

but they do not admit of either these two methods of verification. The relations of number and extension form no element in purely moral and spiritual phenomena, and experiments cannot be tried, because we can never be sure we know *all* the conditions or circumstances that may modify the result; we can never be sure we have excluded the action of other and unknown causes. "There is not," Mr Mill tells us, "amongst these most complex and most modifiable of all phenomena, any one over which innumerable forces do not exercise influence, or which does not depend on the combination of very many causes." Thus moral sciences inform us of tendencies not of actual results: and hence some have doubted whether any moral certainty can be attained here. But this defect, whilst it keeps us from predicting particular events, does not make the data of these sciences—i.e. the events which have occurred, and the order of their sequence—less certain: neither does it make their conclusions less trustworthy, so long as we do not push them beyond what the data warrant: for example, the tendencies indicated by a true political economy are as certain as the actual events foretold by astronomy.

On the other hand the moral sciences possess some advantages peculiar to themselves. That their method is deductive is at least no element of uncertainty. Then the facts on which they are mainly built, are very much more within the reach of our observation, than are those of most of the physical sciences. The moral sciences make their demand on experience and observation just at those points when experience is widest, observation most constantly possible, and attention most generally roused. The astronomer may have to wait three hundred years to collect his data for determining the orbit of his comet:

but there is no waking hour in the observer's life which may not give him evidence as to the law of habit.

Then the judge, in those moral sciences which mainly concern us now, is neither abstract reason, nor acute understanding, but common sense—the regulative faculty of Sir W. Hamilton; and this, however uncommon, is still within the reach of all honest minds, in a degree in which the great labour of continuous attention demanded by mathematical calculations,—the special gift of geometrical imagination,—or the trained skill and acuteness of intelligence needed by the physical student, can never be.

Moreover their very complexity gives us in the higher moral sciences evidence of a most conclusive kind, which we can never get, to anything like the same extent, in the physical sciences. For owing to this complexity of action all these sciences afford tests of each other, and several of the physical sciences yield evidence on portions of them. And thus we get, for our Divine Revelation especially, the test of cumulative evidence.

In the physical sciences this occurs now and then, and will occur more frequently. Astronomy is giving us evidence at last on the chronology of geologists. And both these sciences are giving evidence on a few points of the hypothesis of evolution. But in general the evidence here is of one kind, running as it were in the same line. Historical records and moral systems admit of collateral evidence all round.

Let us take for example the evidence we may have for the authenticity and veracity of some ancient history.

i. There is the direct evidence of some ancient MSS. : the writer of which professes to have lived in or near the time of the events he records; he writes as an eye-witness of some of them; having received others from traditions

handed down in the same family or tribe, from father to son, or from eyewitnesses. We find perhaps a second or third historian telling us parts of the same history with divergencies that exclude the hypothesis of copying, and with undesigned coincidences which are unaccountable on the hypothesis of invention.

ii. We find contemporary or nearly contemporary literature, epistles, edicts, philosophies, apologies, &c., referring incidentally to some of the same events or to their results, and agreeing or disagreeing with the narrative we are verifying.

Then we look about for circumstantial evidence. Our history tells us of some feast, custom, or other observance, instituted in memory of the events it records: we find these were observed from near that time, and have continued to be observed since.

Then medals are dug up, contemporary inscriptions are discovered, sculptures are found, which when they touch on the events recorded in our history test its veracity. Ruined cities are disinterred and fill up its outline. There is the evidence afforded by the physical geography of the districts where our MSS. say such and such events took place, such a population subsisted, such scenery was noted. None but an eyewitness will have used exactly the epithets that suit the scene. Then the language in which it has been written, the names it gives to places, the titles it uses, will afford some tests of its actual date; and crucial instances may be sometimes found in this way; fixing its date conclusively within a very few years.

There may also be evidence of a state of society preceding the events in question, which would tend to prepare the way for them, and to cause them to have such and such results: and which renders their occurrence at that

time a natural climax, a consummation and not a breach of continuity if our narrative of the events is a true one.

And lastly there is the evidence of results. This is as we have seen the crucial point in all demonstration. In the case we are supposing, we may have evidence from many and unquestionable sources, of a state of society actually produced by the events related in our narrative,—a great crisis occurring, a government overthrown, a religion destroyed and replaced by a new one: of a fresh impulse and a new direction given to the lives and aims of men: of a new stage of developement reached, such as would naturally be produced by the events recorded, if they had really occurred, but which remain unexplained by any known law or tendency of human nature, on the supposition that those events were purely mythical.

Now no one of these independent lines of proof would, by itself, suffice to demonstrate the truthfulness of the history recorded, if that history be an exceptional one. But when they coincide and each points to that one conclusion, this coincidence is itself a fresh evidence for the truth of the direct testimony. The proposition that the history is a true one, is the keystone which unites all these arches—is the central fact in which all these chains of reasoning unite, each one of which is a separate induction. Each of these is equal in logical force to a distinct line of experiments leading up to a scientific conclusion. Such an amount of evidence as this may be calculated by the doctrine of chances. It amounts in fact to a moral demonstration: i. e. the supposition that the whole has combined to deceive us is incredible. And this, as we have seen, is the highest proof which the phenomenal sciences can ever afford us.

Beyond this historical evidence for the substantial truth

of our history lies the whole region of philosophical evidence as to the reality of those relations between God and ourselves, which our Revelation asserts, and which are discovered to us in Christ, in His work and His words. If the relations therein asserted are real ones, it is evident they are the fundamental and governing relations of our nature, being, and place in the universe. Accordingly we find this revelation distinguished from all other religions, by being coextensive with human nature and human history: so that there is nothing which concerns men which is not at some point or other touched on by it, or involved in it, so as to be rightly subordinated to it. And hence there are few human sciences which will not, on some point or other, touch on, and corroborate or conflict with some part of our Revelation: whilst there can be no system of philosophy which will not as it developes come into agreement or collision with it. The logical result of this extensive domain is twofold. On the one hand, if it is false, the *positive* proofs of its falsity ought to be found directly in every history, and indirectly in almost every science. On the other hand, if it be true, we ought to expect a far greater amount of direct, of corroborative, and of circumstantial evidence, than any narrower or more partial religion could afford. If the relations unfolded to us in Christ are real relations, they will for us contain the key of all the relations of the Universe.

But at present we know only a few relations, and these few we know imperfectly. Nor have we any right to expect that a progressive revelation like ours must if true be now completed. Science therefore forbids us to assume that when a conflict arises between our infant sciences or partial philosophies, and a revelation neither yet completed in itself nor fully comprehended by us, that one or the

other must be summarily rejected. He that believes in the truth alike of God's words and works will not make haste.

In fact if we deal with the evidences for the facts of Revelation, as we honestly deal with the evidences of secular sciences, the difficulty that oppresses us is, how to gather up the enormous amount of proofs that bear upon and corroborate its various portions, so as to get any adequate idea of their cumulative force. It is very easy to attack so vast a system on isolated points: it is very difficult to sum up into one view all its evidences. Their very number, variety, strength and depth, makes it difficult to state them adequately, and almost impossible to estimate their united force. To do this, you must bear in mind such an amazing amount of deductions, that whilst you are considering the force of these you are losing sight of those.

We must therefore be content now to indicate the greater lines of evidence, and roughly estimate their force, without attempting to enter into their countless details.

But here on the threshold we are met by the objection I referred to before; that all this evidence must be set aside *ab initio*, because

i. We have no grounds for conviction, except those we obtain through the senses: and therefore

ii. All religious notions being based on the assumption that God exists, this assumption being incapable of proof, and the alleged fact being utterly unknowable; religious notions are destitute of any real foundation.

We will take the first now, reserving the second for another lecture.

The rule of evidence we have to apply here is, that "arguments which would be fatal to all knowledge what-

"soever, are not admissible as against any special kind or "class of knowledge." We have then already answered the assertion in principle; for we have seen that we can get no information from sensible phenomena, unless we apply to them convictions which we do not reach through the senses. The senses inform us of particulars only, never of generals. Clearly also convictions reached by testimony, by inference, and by memory are not reached through our senses, in the obvious meaning of that term. Nor is it less obvious, that if we have no grounds for this class of convictions we can have no convictions at all. The assertion as thus stated asserts far too much, and far more than it is intended to mean.

But the hypothesis is that all our knowledge is derived from experience alone*: the axioms of mathematics, the assumed uniformity of phenomena and of their sequences, are, this school maintains, only the result of past experiences, originally obtained through the senses, and influencing our minds by way of associations we cannot now get rid of, or conceive to be broken.

I fear we must turn sceptical here: for this is to build up the whole fabric of our knowledge on our 'incapacity.' An obscure and quite hypothetical chain of associations, which we are hypothetically assumed to have inherited from long past, and for the most part hypothetical generations, can never become the ground of any reasonable conviction whatsoever. However let us come to the point, and analyzing 'the experience obtained through the

* Although we can by no means assent to this proposition as an adequate one, philosophically; it is not needful for our present position to dispute it. The Christian may well be content to limit his defensive weapons to those furnished by experience, so long as 'experience' is not arbitrarily limited to the 'experience of sensible impressions,' but is honestly and fairly followed everywhere.

'senses,' see how much of it really comes from the senses, how much is added by our own minds.

We said our knowledge is limited to relations or properties. And when we examine those properties which we are aware of through our senses, we find that we know them only as effects produced on our consciousness. When I look at any sensible object—this table for instance—all I am conscious of by sight is colour and form. Experience tells me that uniformly grouped with this individual instance of colour and form, are the sensations of muscular resistance, smoothness and coolness. But that experience comes from remembered states of consciousness; and memory is not one of our senses. The conviction I have that this whole group of my own sensations indicate properties of an objective substance, existing outside of me, and independently of my sensations, is a conviction not given me by my senses: it is added by my own mind. The senses convince me of colour and form: they give me the sensation of muscular resistance and smoothness: colour, form, resistance, smoothness, are not substances, but properties. The fact is we are incapable of conceiving these properties floating about unattached to some thing, some substance of which they are the property; or of relations apart from things related. But this conviction is not reached through the senses.

The very small share that the senses have in our convictions, is still more evident when we analyze the consciousnesses of colour, form, &c. aroused through the senses. "We believe that we see distances, extensions, forms; but "all we really see are the accompanying optical effects on "our own nerves of sight. Form, for instance, is entirely a "rapidly formed inference which has become automatic by "habit." That means that form is the result of a judge-

ment not of a sensation: by the untrained eye of a blind man just restored to sight, all the colours of the landscape are seen splashed on a flat surface, touching his eyes: so a baby will stretch out its hands for the moon; it sees no distance yet beyond a few feet. And what is colour? tiny wavelets or vibrations of different lengths, beat against the retina, and by the optic nerve arouse our consciousness, which instantly translates the varying impact of these waves into colours, forms, and all the glories of the sunset sea and sky. So it is with the waves of sound, and with all the information received through the senses. The *sensation* comes through the senses, the *information* is wholly the work of the interpreting mind. When the physicist is investigating brain matter by the microscope, or star matter by the spectroscope, he is thus confidently relying on a marvellous subjective process of his own mind; and all the convictions he arrives at depend for their objective reality on its subjective credibility. "It would be impossible for mental science, without the aid of physical science, to prove that the mind has the extraordinary power of so interpreting physical motions, as to create a subjective world which is to the external world, not the wax impression to the seal, but the meaning of the book to the type in which it is printed*." Our minds do this, nor can we prevent or alter this interpretation. But the question now is, can we rely on their doing it truly, and if we can, on what grounds? The senses cannot demonstrate this, for they give us no information whatsoever unless this interpretation is true. It is as impossible to prove it true, as it practically is impossible to question it. And unless we accept it as true we can know nothing of matter or of its properties. Thus if we are to reject all convictions except those we reach

* *Church Quarterly Review on Unseen Universe.*

through the senses, we shall keep none of this class, and shall know nothing beyond individual states of our own consciousness.

So far then we have got to this. As in the method of acquiring knowledge of unknown from known facts, the truth of the result depends ultimately on the truth of certain convictions of our own minds, not obtained through the senses, and not capable of proof; so now we find that in physical enquiries our certainty of the known facts themselves is founded on a rooted conviction, or ultimate belief*, in the veracity of the automatic interpretations given by our own minds to our various sensations.

There is another 'ultimate belief' we must add to these: the belief in the veracity of our memory of past consciousness. Mill himself, "who never could hear the phrase 'ultimate belief' without seeming to cry out "take away that brute of a word†," acknowledges this. "For he traces up all our knowledge to experience‡: he shows (which truly needs no showing) we have no experience without memory. And therefore all the veracity of our knowledge depends on the veracity of our memory." How do we know memory is true? "Our belief," he answers, "in the veracity of our memory is evidently ultimate. No reason can be given for it, which does not presuppose the belief, and assume it to be well founded."

Now consider how entirely our knowledge depends on memory§. "Without memory and all that memory in-

* An 'ultimate belief' is a conviction common to all sane minds which cannot be resolved into associations formed by experience nor analyzed further. This is the case here because we can have no experience which does not assume its veracity.

† *Recent British Philosophies*, Prof. D. Masson.

‡ *Battle of the two Philosophies*.

§ See Sir W. Hamilton, *Lectures on Metaphysics*. Vol. 1.

"volves" we should be conscious of each individual impression at the moment of impact, without knowing we ever had one before, and without expecting another: "each sensation would in fact constitute a separate existence." Then we cannot remember a past sensation without distinguishing it from our present sensation: nor distinguish without comparing, nor compare without remembering. And all these mental acts we must perform, and in the truth of the results we must believe, before we can reach a single 'conviction through the senses,' or have any experience at all, even of our own continuous existence*.

Hence the foundation of all experience and of every conviction is an ultimate belief, or conviction, not obtained from the senses. We have got from the elephant to the tortoise now; what does the ultimate belief rest upon?

When all we know or ever can know, rests on assumptions that can never be proved, can we be truly said to know anything? Not if we insist on intellectual independence, on building up the palace of our knowledge on a foundation of our own laying, or on the chance veracity of automatic and hereditary associations. Then all our science, sound and sure when once started, has not even that foundation of sand of which our Lord's parable

* If it be said that (i) memory being a mere brain function, (ii) it is justly classed as a bodily sense: we answer that (i) is at present a mere unproved assertion; and (ii) that whatever the unknown relation between memory and the brain may be; memory itself, involving as it must do comparison and judgement, is a complex mental action. If it is meant to support the assertion that we have no grounds of conviction except those we obtain through the senses, by including in 'the senses' all the mental faculties; the distinction sought to be drawn becomes merely a verbal one. No one ever imagined that we have any grounds for convictions of which we are not conscious.

speaks. It has no foundation except some baseless assumptions of our own.

Think what that means for us. As Dean Church says* :—

“We are born with the instinct and the desire of certainty; we imply it in every act we do and in every argument we use. Yet certainty flies from our analysis, and from our verifying tests. Truth is impossible without freedom of thought; yet no sooner is thought free than it eats away all certainty—historical, moral, religious, and scientific; till it turns on itself and surrenders its own consciousness of existence and freedom, a prey and a sacrifice to a theory.—We are distracted between rival claims to our allegiance; nature, and common sense, and irresistible convictions—irresistible in spite of all objections and all demonstrations; and reasons of the heart which Reason knows not; and on the other hand the keen, cold, subtle conclusions of Reason itself.”

“Qui démêlera cet embrouillement?” cries Pascal†. “Humiliez-vous, raison impuissante; taisez-vous, nature imbecile: apprenez que l’homme passe infiniment l’homme, et entendez de votre Maître votre condition véritable. Ecoutez Dieu.”

Yes; since reason separated from its Giver lands us in this negation, this death; let us hear what its elder sister faith has to offer us.

It is true that the certainty of all our sciences rests on beliefs which are at once inevitable and undemonstrable. But we, who on other grounds trust in God our Creator, neither accept these beliefs on our own authority, which is in such matters worthless; nor without any reason at all.

* *St James' Lectures*, 1st Series. *Pensées de Pascal*.

† *Pensées*, 2nd Partie, Article v. § 3.

We find them to be necessary parts of our mental constitution ; and we accept them on His authority Who made us what we are ; and Who either gave them to us in the original constitution of our minds, or Who caused them to grow up in us, as we grew out of matter into mind.

Nor is this merely begging the question. It is simply using that deductive method which our great sceptical master of logic has warned us is the only proper method in such subjects as this.

And you will see how completely this account of the matter fits into, and consistently explains all the facts of the case. For :

i. We find ourselves now in possession of consciousness and its interpretations ; of memory and its associations ; of reason and its axioms ;—and of an invincible belief in their veracity.

ii. We find ourselves endowed with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and unable to rest without certainty, yet unable to get either without accepting that belief.

iii. And we find ourselves living in a world of mind and thought, in a world of matter and energy, both affording us endless materials for knowledge, if we will accept those beliefs and trust the Great Maker Who gave them to us, for not deceiving us by His gift.

Thus at the first step we find our Divine Revelation does give us a key to the fundamental relations of consciousness : a key which fits into the subtle wards of this metaphysical lock, and opening the subtle chaotic enigma of which Pascal spoke, shows us an orderly, reasonable, and sure foundation, on which reason can act and knowledge be built. It tells us that He Who made us capable of learning, and placed us in a Cosmos of which every atom is fitted to teach us ; has also given us in the existing

constitution of our minds those axioms and intuitions, those ultimate beliefs, which are needed for our learning anything. These first faiths then are a part of that Light which lighteth every man that comes into the world. When in seeking out knowledge we trust implicitly on them we are not trusting to self-made assertions, nor to the blind weakness of obscure and chance associations, but to God's eternal and perfect truth. We receive them as true because they actually are fundamental parts of the nature He has given us. And because they do help us to satisfy the longing for knowledge with which He has inspired us, we conclude He furnished us with them for that purpose; and confidently build up the structure of our sciences upon them, because it is His veracity and not our own on which we build.

This seems to have been a part of the sin of our first parents. They desired to know for themselves; to build up the palace of their science on a foundation of their own laying, independently of God. And as soon as they began, they had no more certainty—they found they were naked.

And so it has been ever since. Here also it is true, that other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid: no other light will serve our need, than that which God gives us*.

* There is a wonderful history of a soul that would thus live and learn in self-dependence on the glory of her own powers in Tennyson's *Palace of Art*. Written near 40 years ago there are parts of it that come to us now with a new and vividly sarcastic application to the recent work of some of our sceptical philosophers.

LECTURE III.

ONTOLOGICAL EVIDENCE, OR THE EXISTENCE OF THE GREAT FIRST CAUSE.

- "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ?
"Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest ? or who hath
stretched the line upon it ?
"Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts ? or who hath given under-
standing to the heart ?"*

WE considered the last time we met (i) the nature of Evidence, and (ii) the basis on which all evidence rests. With respect to the first, we are all agreed : with respect to the second, we had two accounts before us :

a. That of the materialist that we have no grounds of conviction, or of knowledge, except those we obtain through the senses.

b. That of the Christian that we have no basis of knowledge except that of faith in the veracity of God, Who caused us to have those intuitions or ultimate beliefs without which we could learn nothing with any certainty.

In examining the first we found that all our sense-gained knowledge is based on two ultimate beliefs of our own, (i) on the veracity of our automatic interpretations of momentary consciousness, (ii) on the veracity of our memory of past consciousness. We found that these

convictions cannot be due to conscious experience or to the senses; for they precede both.

Thus the materialist account fails to explain the basis on which evidence rests, and leaves it without any.

On the other hand our revelation supplies a rational and consistent explanation, and an adequate basis, in the veracity of God our Maker.

Now this is a probable argument for the truth of Revelation and one of some weight. The analysis of the evidence got through the senses, is in part due to the discoveries of modern science. And if our ancient faith were of merely human origin, it could hardly have so fitted into this new difficulty as to have given us exactly that basis of knowledge the want of which modern science has discovered to us. But this is not positive evidence to us for the presence and being of God, which, following the deductive method, it begins by assuming. And the question before us is, how can we know, certainly and without any reasonable doubt, that God is?

I must begin by reminding you that we use this word know, knowledge, in two senses. One is the strictly logical sense, in which we are said 'to know' only what is proved to us by demonstration. The other is the common sense, but less definite usage, when we say we 'know' what is so highly probable that we are morally certain of it, and quite ready to trust our lives and fortunes to that conviction if need be. It is in the first sense the astronomer says he 'knows' that Jupiter's first satellite was eclipsed last night, or that the sun rose at 47 minutes past six this morning. It is in the second sense he says he 'knows' that Jupiter's third satellite will be eclipsed this evening, or that the sun will rise at 49 minutes after six tomorrow morning.

Now disputants on our subject, and indeed on most, are apt to use the word in both senses, unconsciously changing from one to the other. Thus when they say "you cannot know that God is;" they mean "you cannot demonstrate His existence." And when they say "we do know from the results of physical science, the reign of inexorable law," they are using it quite in the second sense. For all physical science proceeds on the assumption that the sequences of the phenomena of matter and energy are uniform. But this is an assumption which can never be demonstrated.

Their real argument is,—and it is a perfectly legitimate one:—Assuming that matter and energy exist and that their phenomena are uniform, we can explain on a considerable number of points—not yet on all—the actual condition of the visible world in which we find ourselves. Therefore we say, we know this uniformity prevails throughout it. The same phenomena have occurred in the same order so often, we feel sure they will occur in that order in each future instance. Past coincidences show it is many thousand times more probable that our assumption is right than wrong.

But then this is just the Christian argument. Assuming the presence of God, and the reality of His relations to us as declared to us in Christ; we can explain whole series of phenomena, material, mental, moral, spiritual, historical,—which otherwise remain inexplicable. And these coincidences are sufficiently numerous to establish the truth of our assumption, and we say 'we know.' It is not a mathematical but a moral certainty we want, and get here.

We must then be on our guard against this fallacy. They call on us to believe the relations discovered in physical

science without demonstration of uniformity. They call on us to admit the conclusions of mathematical science without demonstration of its axioms. They forbid us to believe our revealed and experienced relations to God, unless we can first demonstrate His existence. And there are some who demand that if we are to have any religious knowledge, it shall be intuitive and therefore universal.

Clearly we cannot be called upon to prove God's existence in any other sense than that in which we prove that this outward world exists, that other men and women exist. And therefore we must go back and ask, how do we prove the existence of any thing or person, or show their objective presence in our Cosmos?

There are but three conceivable ways of knowing anything. i. By direct intuition: ii. by ultimate belief: iii. by evidence of experience, testimony, and inference.

Intuitive knowledge is not possible to us, except of the momentary present consciousness, and possibly of certain mathematical axioms and moral perceptions: but this is now disputed. Theologians tell us that God's knowledge is intuitive; that is what they gather by inference from the terms in which it is spoken of in Scripture. Philosophers tell us the same thing, when they speak of it as Absolute and Unconditioned; that means that He beholds all beings and things as they are in themselves, in their circumstances, and in their relations, 'in their essence,' the old term was, and in their actions and passions, not by dividing these, but in their complete unity. Let us try to think what that means.

It is different in degree from ours, for it is complete knowledge. If I could behold your essence, I should see your complex nature, body, soul and spirit, without having to separate these in thought. I should not only see every

vital process and chemical change going on in the one; every changing feeling, thought, wish, resolve passing in the other; every delicate action and reaction of body on mind and will, of mind and will on each other and on the body: I should not only see and know you as you are, including all your history, what you were made, what circumstances have made you, what you have made yourself; but I should see you, and all the possibilities that are in you. As Tennyson wrote of the little flower:

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower:—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and Man is.

Well, this intuitive knowledge is different also in kind. We can see it must be so, though having no experience of it, we cannot conceive what it is, except through the deficiencies of which we are conscious in our own knowledge. Yet the effort to think of it as the opposite of our negations may not be useless, if it help us to see more clearly the limits of our own knowledge; and to get a little nearer to the contents of such a word as this: "All things are "naked and open unto the eyes of Him, with Whom we "have to do": if it help us to enter a little more into the fulness of the promise, that the time may come when this higher and calmer knowledge may be ours; when God in His infinite mercy shall have transformed us and our feeble minds so far nearer His Likeness that "we "shall know, even as we are known." And when in our painful human analysis we come across this instinctive desire for a kind of knowledge of which experience gives us no hint whatsoever, may we not see in that dim notion the evidence of an already existing germ of that future

capacity which God has thus promised to evolve within us?

However this may be, our knowledge at present is not thus absolute, but conditioned: it is not of substances, but of properties or relations. We saw this in our last lecture: we discover properties by our senses, and infer that these are the properties of some existing entity or substance: we observe changes and movements, and infer the presence of some power, or energy. In like manner we infer our own existence, from our consciousness of feeling, thinking, acting, in the present moment, and from our memory of past consciousnesses of our own. As Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am." Clearly the '*I think*' here is an assumption of my own existence: but it is one I cannot help making. We add to the consciousness of thinking, the conviction that it is the consciousness, the property, and action, of a really existing substance.

In both cases alike the data on which we build are series of consciousnesses. And we distinguish these series into two great groups: those which, being roused through the senses, are inseparably associated with the idea of extension or mass, we refer to a substance or entity existing outside ourselves which we call matter. Those consciousnesses which are separable from the notions of extension and mass; and which are roused by emotions, ideas, or their associations; we refer to an existence or entity we call living soul or mind. Thus colour is always referred to the first class: but the emotion of fear, though roused by an outward object, is not referred to a material object, or supposed to be its property, but to ourselves.

If we have no reason for inferring the existence of a living conscious being from the properties and relations of thought and emotion, we certainly have none for inferring

existence of matter and energy from our other set of consciousness. In fact both conclusions are irresistible and both are altogether and entirely undemonstrable. However hard you try to believe you are only a series of states of consciousness, you can no more believe it than you can believe this table is nothing but a subjective creation of your own consciousness.

This conviction of the objective reality of entities, substances, existences, is an inevitable faith or belief which all mankind has got, and of which we cannot now divest ourselves. And in this case the belief can hardly have grown up in us by experience; because we never had any experience, so far as we can tell, of substances, but only of changing states of consciousness. Here is the fallacy of those, who, accepting the evidence of consciousness and its interpretations as a sure foundation for sciences that deal with the properties of matter and motion, reject its testimony as to itself and its own phenomena. Physical science they say is all sure: we know what brain and electric currents are and what they can do, but we have no proof at all of the existence of mind or soul, as anything but a brain energy. But mind in its primary acts is consciousness: and unless we accept consciousness as a credible witness for our own existence, we cannot accept it as a credible witness and interpreter of things outside itself, of not consciousness. Prof. Huxley gets over this difficulty by admitting that we know nothing of matter "but as the name of the unknown "and hypothetical cause of states of our own consciousness": and then claiming that "we know nothing of spirit except "as the unknown and hypothetical cause or condition of "states of consciousness. *They are both but names for the "imaginary substrata of groups of natural phenomena*."*

* *On the Physical Basis of Life.* Prof. Huxley. See note B.

Here we have a misrepresentation by omission. Those two words are not names of the substrata of the same groups of phenomena, but of two distinct sets of groups. And 'natural' thus used is deceptive because it is used so often and I think by Huxley himself, to connote physical, in distinction to spiritual or mental phenomena: whereas he uses it here to denote both classes of phenomena. And he wants to assign one name to both classes. But if this be all, why does Professor Huxley think it would be more scientific to call that unknown hypothetical cause of states of consciousness, *matter* than to call it *mind*? Language, that great storehouse of human experience, has registered and marked off by these two words, a distinction or classification of states of consciousness into two distinct groups. It is a distinction we do make practically and cannot help making: and such words as *matter*, *mind*, *spirit*, and their synonyms, common to all languages except those of savages, are registers of quite countless individual observations and distinctions, made by men in every age and of every race. An experiential philosopher above all others, is bound to receive such testimony of universal experience, with the utmost possible accuracy, and as of the gravest importance. By giving up either name, this experience will not be done away with: facts are not changed by changing our nomenclature, neither are distinctions obliterated, though they may be forgotten. It may be—to me it certainly seems it is,—necessary for the materialistic hypothesis to get rid of this distinction; and no doubt the easiest, probably the only possible way of getting mankind to forget it, will be to give to both sets one name; and then retaining the name hitherto used to denote mass and extension, and dropping that which denotes consciousness and thought, might facilitate for a time the adoption of a materialistic philosophy.

It is remarkable that Prof. Tyndall also was anxious to obliterate this register of experience, and exactly in the same manner, though with the rashness so characteristic of the man. To prove his hypothesis that matter is the cause of mind, he says he defines 'matter' "as that mysterious something by which all this"—i. e. all phenomena from the evaporation of water to the self-conscious life of man—"has been accomplished*." That is he will define matter so as to include in it all the phenomena of mind, and then prove that matter is the cause of mind, by virtue of his own definition. We might as well define 'mind' as "that mysterious something by which the universe and all its phenomena has been accomplished"; and then say, "this proves mind to be the cause of matter." If this be not begging the question, it is at least slipping by the question and begging the word.

But really all this argument does but cut the ground from under the materialist's feet. "If as Prof. Tyndall bids "us we deny all reality to the nominative of the sentence "I know heat and motion,' can we be sure the accusatives "have any reality? they exist to me, only as they exist in "my consciousness....If it is unscientific to assume an "entity who perceives and feels and wills, it is clearly unscientific to assume there is anything perceived, felt, or "willed. If there is no reason to suppose there is a person "to apprehend the external world, there can be no reason "to suppose there is an external world to be apprehended: "for it is only through the act of apprehension that any "one even supposes himself to reach it†." In cutting away everything but states of consciousness, as Prof. Huxley does above, it is matter that is gone and mind in

* Answer to Rev. J. Martineau, *Contemp. Review*, Feb. '76.

† *Spectator*, Oct. 6, '77.

its simplest mode that remains. And with matter brain and brain currents are gone too, the whole material world, the whole world of men gone, you left as an unreal, unmeaning, worthless thread of states of consciousness, without any beginning, without any object, left utterly alone, for ever unable to tell if a single other such thread of states of consciousness is going on. The only rational conclusion from such a philosophy is the ironical one:

“Thinking is but a waste of thought,
And nought is everything and everything is nought.”

When following any train of reasoning we are thus brought to such an inevitable *reductio ad absurdum*, it is time to abandon it; and admitting our ignorance of the reason why we assume existences from properties, we submit to the necessity, in the faith that the assumption is true, whose denial would land us in so incredible and horrible an absurdity. We return to common sense.

When then our opponents deny we can know anything of the attributes of God, or of His relations to us, until we have first demonstrated His existence, we simply refer them to that rule of logic, which tells us, that we cannot admit arguments against any special branch of knowledge, which if admitted would be fatal to all knowledge. Logic is the only exact science to which we and our opponents can here appeal. It is impossible for us to demonstrate the existence of God, only in that sense in which it is impossible to demonstrate the existence of any substance or movement. In all these cases we infer existence from properties or actions; therefore when we say we know the sun exists, we mean we recognise in the phenomena of light, heat, and in all the planetary movements, the presence of a vast heat-giving mass (not merely as our sight tells us a small and flat circular disk), which we call the sun. These

phenomena are marks from which we infer the sun's presence. And when we say we know God is, we mean that we recognise in this universe, in our own constitution, in our conscious experience, in all we see and comprehend, marks of the presence of that overruling and directing Intelligence and Power, which we call God,—and marks of His relation to us. We infer His existence from these marks of His Presence.

And when the sceptic says We cannot know God is, he means (if he is speaking scientifically) we cannot be conscious of His dealings with ourselves, either by our own experience, by the testimony of others, by His own testimony, or by legitimate inference: and that there is nothing in the known phenomena of the universe, which bears the marks of such a Presence.

All then which we can be called on to do here, is to show there are mental qualities displayed, and whole series of phenomena,—physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual, going on in this universe which not only justify us in inferring, but which compel us to infer the presence of such a First Cause, and Divine Originator and Ruler: to infer that is God's absolute and real, from His relative Existence: phenomena which cannot be accounted for, in conformity with our uniform experience, without assuming His existence. So that as a German philosopher said: "if it were true that there is no God, it would be necessary, would we have any rational philosophy at all, to postulate God."

We will take to-day the grounds we have for inferring the presence of an Intelligent First Cause. The word 'Cause' does not always bear the same meaning, so I shall try to distinguish the different senses in which I use it, by its adjective.

When 'Cause' simply denotes the uniform antecedent

of any sequent phenomena, I shall call it the antecedent cause. One antecedent cause of the digestive process is eating food.

Adequate cause denotes that the antecedent cause is sufficiently important, or equal to the sequent: i. e. there is a sufficient amount of Malaria to account for the outbreak of fever in a given place.

Efficient cause is an adequate cause that actually brings about the sequent effect: it is the real cause: it connotes power: "Vera Causa" means not an hypothetical one, but one which we know to exist, as the efficient cause of phenomena similar in kind to those we are investigating.

Final Cause is used in a limited sense, for the idea, reason or motive which determines the conscious volition to aim at such or such an effect.

Ultimate or First Cause means the adequate and efficient cause of all causes and all results.

All then are agreed, that all human science is based on the assumption that every event has an adequate antecedent cause, and that the relation of antecedents and sequences is uniform. Unless we are certain that the same antecedents will always be followed in the same circumstances by the same effects, then however it may be with revealed truths, there can be no human science whatever.

And when we accept this uniformity, we ask what causes this uniformity? The final cause of our having any science, is that our minds keep constantly asking why? and are invincibly convinced there must be a why, if we can only find it out. Now many scientific men tell us it is uniformity of succession we are asking for; they tell us science knows nothing of efficient causes. Our minds do; and will not let us rest from that weary why? until we get

a glimpse at least of an efficient cause, a real cause lying behind all succession.

The fact is that uniformity of succession is only a part of what we mean by the relation of cause and effect. If it were all, what would be the sense of adequate cause, or cause equal to the effect? Unquestionably 'cause' implies 'power' in the ordinary use of the term. Whence does this idea of causative power come? It would not be correct to say the earth has the power to draw the apple to itself; we used to say "it has the property". But the cause of your being here to-day is not that you have the property of coming, but that you had the power and you chose to come. And if we go further back, the final cause of your coming was that you had an idea, a thought which roused your volition. It is probably this experience that suggests the idea and the necessity of efficient causes. "The only positive notion which I possess of causative power, is that "of myself, determining my own volition*." But if it were true, as the necessarian tells us, that we have no experience at all of efficient causes, and that nothing living ever had such an experience: it would be still more staggering to find, that from the youngest to the oldest, the thought of it, the demand for what Leibnitz called "the why of the "why,"—holds its ground invincibly. All the present condition of the universe may have come out of and be accounted for by its preceding condition; but we ask, why did it? And they answer by telling us what they think may have been the order and method of its coming: and we listen and admire; and then ask again—what made it evolve in this so curious a manner? The method and order are very interesting;—but what was it that made things happen in that order and follow that method for bringing

* Mansell's *Metaphysics*, ch. Ontology, p. 366.

about these ends? What caused the method? And they tell us we are silly, and trying to know the unknowable; and—like hungry children chidden for asking and told they cannot be hungry—we try to be satisfied, and we are not: we do want an efficient cause for all we see, and feel, and know, for all we are and hope to become.

Thus when in the words of Canon Garbett, “we have discovered a cause, we are impelled to go back and ask “what caused that cause? and the latter is to us the true “cause, till its cause is known. The cause of the cause “is the real cause of the effect, and the Ultimate Cause is “the only real one. Either then we must abandon the idea “of cause altogether or we must rest in some one Ultimate “cause, which is the only true Cause containing in itself the “Potency of all things: and this is what history tells us “men have done; hence the Gods many and the Lords “many, and finally the one God.”

But here we come upon another battlefield, no longer of experience but of reason. We are agreed to accept causation as the universal law of all the phenomena of our universe. But some deny, not that men have almost universally asserted a first cause, but that this assertion is well founded.

Assuming causation, there are only three hypotheses open to us here, whereby to account for the present Cosmos.

1. Either it had a causeless absolute commencement, i.e. it began to be without any cause for its beginning;
2. or it had a first efficient cause subsisting through all eternity;
3. or it is itself an infinite chain of antecedent causes and sequent effects, without any commencement or any efficient cause.

Now all three are alike incomprehensible, but one of

them must be true. The first denies causation and must therefore be set aside by both sides. Our opponents denying the second, and not asserting the third, take refuge in the unknowable. But, so long as they affirm "every phenomenon must have its antecedent cause," this position is untenable. For if we know a chain of cause and effect, we know it either had a beginning, or did not have a beginning: so that to deny a First Cause is to affirm an infinite non-beginning. If they say, "it is impossible for human beings to tell which of the two is true": they assume that the whole range of human capacities is known;—which is not true. Moreover they in fact affirm that we do not and never can know that every effect has its antecedent cause. But if they mean, *they* do not know which of the two hypotheses is true, then they can neither deny the second nor affirm the third; they must cease to speak, and leave others to judge which of the two is most credible to reason, and most conformable to experience.

Now both a first self-subsisting cause, and an infinite chain of cause and effect without any causal commencement, are alike incomprehensible. But to be incomprehensible is not the same as to be incredible. Infinite time or space is incomprehensible; but their non-infinity, i.e. their coming to an end, with no space, no time, beyond that end, is both incomprehensible and incredible: for it contradicts our reason and uniform experience.

Now reason tells us that in infinite non-commencement there is no real cause at all, only a chain of effects uncaused. And this so contradicts our conviction of causation, our experience, our 'generalizing instinct,' that it never can really gain the assent of men: it is incredible as well as incomprehensible. But the only escape from it is in a First Self-subsistent Cause. "Thus reason when it

"once awakes to the simple truth that every effect has a cause, leads us upwards, with swift and irresistible progress, to the feet of the Almighty. It cannot rest till it has pointed us to the one great First Cause, on which lower causes and all created beings must depend*."

For what reason tells us is that all things that began to be must have had a prior existing cause. It cannot possibly tell us there is nothing existing that did not begin but always was: in fact as reason rejects the idea of a causeless beginning, it must assert that something always was. Some materialists assert that matter was this eternally existing thing, which never began to be, and which is the potency of all things that are†. Here then we agree to adopt the second proposition; and our choice lies between i. an eternally existing matter the first cause of all things, and ii. an eternally existing God. To decide between these two hypotheses we turn to experience: and we must proceed deductively to discover the true character of this real efficient First Cause, from the marks which we find in those sequent effects which we are able to examine, and which we have learned from experience, generalized inductively, are uniformly associated with such and such antecedents.

Now in investigating all the three distinct classes of phenomena with which we have to do, physical, intellectual, and moral, we come everywhere on marks of order, law, and method. We are living in a governed world, and a very complex one, in which each part, and all these three

* *Difficulties of Belief*, by Prof. Birks, Introduction, page 6.

† It has been suggested that 'Force' is the eternally present potency. But Force or (more properly speaking) Energy so immediately resolves itself into motion, and the presence of movement with nothing yet existing to move is so shadowy, I have thought it needless to notice this hypothesis.

distinct classes of phenomena, are correlated to each other, and fit into each other; just as the various parts of a steam-engine fit into each other and are correlated to the energy that moves them, in order to accomplish the end for which it is designed. Then we come on countless and complex adaptations of means to ends; on whole classes of phenomena, wholly independent of each other in their physical antecedents and laws, remote in time, place and kind; yet working up harmoniously not to one common result but to thousands. For example: this earth has stored up in it, as the result of processes that went on countless ages ago, all the materials we need for our physical civilization; and that on the surface where we can get at them: it supplies us with food for our animal life, but not without that labour which is essential to our bodily and our moral education: its phenomena supply our minds with endless subjects for exercise, and afford us the delights of knowledge and of beauty, from the first dawn of intelligence to its highest efforts. But we are told, all these preparations for our threefold life would have been useless had not the size and distance of the sun been what it is, and rendered the earth a fit place for our abode. All the correlations and adaptations, found in these known and sequent phenomena, are marks of far-seeing forethought, skill, and wisdom, in that unknown antecedent and efficient cause for the character of which we are seeking.

But why should we take this sudden leap from physical sequences and laws to intelligent design and overruling mind?

Simply because experience bids us. To our understandings the gulf between idea and matter, volition and heat-force, is impassable. But in our experience, everything we do, every word we say, every perception we have,

is a passage from the one to the other; and the connecting bridge by which they pass is our own volition.

The only cause of which we have any direct experience, that produces method and adaptations in the results, is volition roused by an idea, which we seek to realize by design; that is to say by the use of means adapted to the accomplishment of our desire. What was the efficient cause of those white marks on the blackboard? the chalk? the hand that drew them? the electric current that moved the hand? we know very well it was the idea, and the desire to express it clearly, which set all these in motion. So of this college itself. But for gravitation it never could have been built: but for heat transformed into muscular energy it never could have been built. Any one who seriously believed its cause was gravitation and heat, would I think be sent to a lunatic asylum. Its cause was an idea, rousing volition, and setting many and diverse physical energies to work to accomplish it.

Well then we know very well that thought, and power of will obeying thought, are in our own affairs the efficient causes of our order, our method, and of all the orderly organizations which we can produce. We know that in human affairs order, uniformity, and adaptation of means to an end, proceed from will, design, and idea. We know very well there will be no organization, no order, no method in our homes, our daily work, our lives, unless some one has conceived the idea of that organization, and taken thought to put it there. And by generalization from these particular cases which we do know, to those other cases, where the marks of method and adaptation are so overwhelmingly present, we infer, and we cannot help inferring, that the same antecedents—thought, purpose and will—were present to produce them. You will see that

this argument is of equal weight whichever of the two propositions before us we decide on adopting. Professor Tyndall's hypothesis,—that all the living consciousnesses we call persons, together with every result of mind and purpose, and all the potentialities of the universe, were originally in the atoms, “so little, so strong, and so wise,” and therefore evolved from them,—does not touch this argument. For adopting this hypothesis, either the atoms and all their potential properties were themselves the eternally and self-existent First Cause of all things, and their characteristics have to be determined by those marks of design, anticipation and idea which we have been considering: or else they were caused, and all these potential properties of life, of mind, and of conscience were caused to inhere in them, in order that they might be evolved, amongst other results, into individual, living, thinking persons. And their cause possessed these properties, and so on, back to the Ultimate or First Cause.

I repeat then, when we meet with phenomena in which these marks of anticipation, wisdom or skill, and adaptation are included, in those cases in which we can consciously or directly trace the phenomenon to its antecedents, we find invariably included among its antecedents those phenomena which we call living conscious thought, will, purpose. These then are their true antecedent causes. To translate this into the materialist's language, we should have to say:—“these are the results of that “function of matter which we call mind; and not of that “function of matter which we call physical energy, or heat-force.” Therefore when we find these marks in any results, for whose antecedent cause we are inquiring, we are unable to assume any other cause for their presence than active thought and purpose in their antecedents,

This is the only *vera causa* which experience gives us for such phenomena.

We must conclude thus, logically. If in examining any physical effect, we find complex means working it out with an exactness and skill which fills our minds with wondering delight and admiration; we infer from the results of wisdom in the effect, the presence of wisdom in the cause. For if there be no skill, no wisdom in the cause, this part of the effect is uncaused, which is incredible. It would be a breach of continuity, an uncaused miracle, and utterly inadmissible to the experiential philosopher above all others.

And we all do infer thus practically. Common sense and experience have taught us to judge what results are due to physical energy, what are the results that living mind-power leaves behind it.

When in the valley of the Liserne, at the foot of the Diablerets, we find "a mountain in ruins," we say unhesitatingly "some gigantic physical force has done this." When in an ancient cave we find a few rudely chipped flint knives, recognizing them as tools we say at once "that was a man's work." Why should not the 'blind 'inexorable forces' that rent the Diablerets asunder, and left it in fragments of every shape and size, have been able also to chip those poor little rough bits of flint? Because there is in the latter the mark of purpose and adaptation: and these are marks of mind, not of heat or its equivalents. When in Iceland we find the boiling fountains, and see the whole country fashioned by fire—we say at once—marks of material or natural agency. When in our fossil cave we find charred bones, we say, this is the result of artificial agency—men have been here, men civilized enough to use fire and to cook.

Thus rude flints, charred bones, masses of ruined building found buried underground, are marks to us of the existence of men we never saw and of whom no tradition whatsoever has survived; and not only marks that they lived, but marks of how they lived, and of what degree of skill and mind-power they possessed.

If in an unknown world we came on a telescope or a microscope, we should at once say,—even though we had never heard or dreamt of such a contrivance before—this is the result of great skill; its cause was a designing mind. And when in our own world we come on such a contrivance as the eye, with its lenses, its self-adapting focus, its cleansing apparatus, its shading curtain, its defences—we are bound by experience to include amongst its antecedent causes, a designing mind possessed of more than human skill and power.

Neither need we be alarmed by being told, this argument is anthropomorphic. The only question that concerns us is, is it a just argument? not by what name it is called. We have seen already that if we are to learn anything at all scientifically, we must argue from what we do know, to what we do not know. To say the argument from experience thus applied cannot be true because it is anthropomorphic, is to say “it cannot be true because it ‘argues from what we do know of mind and its results’”: and the inference this suggests is—it might have been true had we argued from what we do not know; as Professor Tyndall does in endowing material atoms with anticipation and purpose. “We must come to a clear understanding on this point: if we mean to reject conclusions to which experience irresistibly leads us, on the ‘*a priori*’ ground that we will admit no conclusions that ‘are ‘human’; we must cease to inquire, and rejecting

“not merely belief in an intelligent First Cause, but in “conscious thought, in ourselves, in matter and in energy, “—be content to know nothing at all.” Until you can believe that accident and heat have evolved a watch, you cannot believe that chance has evolved first matter, then motion, and then this Cosmos and ourselves. And if in respect of those clumsy adaptations of flint splinters into so-called knives, we may not attribute the purpose marked in them to ‘adaptations and anticipations’ vaguely floating about between the atomic matter of which they are composed and its environments, but are bound to maintain, “the one environment necessary here, was the “presence of a man, and this particular adaptation is the “mark of his mind and will”; so we are equally bound to infer from the marks of anticipation, skill and adaptation—from the marks of mind-power and will so infinitely transcending any human power—which we find in the universe—the presence of a living mind and will, possessed of power and wisdom adequate to those results of mind which we discover. To argue that we know nothing of mind, except as embodied in a corporeal substance, is to beg the question, for the phenomena we are considering *are* evidences of the antecedent presence of mind and intelligence; whilst we are wholly ignorant whether in this case that mind is embodied in a material organization or not. And it is a vicious argument, because it argues from our ignorance. We have no direct knowledge of any minds except our own individual minds: yet through that experience we are able to recognize the products of other minds than our own, and thence to infer the existence of those minds. “To attribute ‘mind’ to “God, is merely to attribute to Him the highest “known attribute of conscious life....If mind needs or-

"ganism, then the Universe is the organism of the Divine Mind*."

There seems indeed to be a growing consent among nearly all scientific thinkers (including at times Professors Huxley and Tyndall) that experience is leading them to see beyond all physical phenomena, underlying them, preceding them, a something, a Presence and a Power that is not material, and to declare that "the tendency even of the physical sciences at the present day, is not towards the omnipotence of matter but towards the omnipotence of spirit†."

Few as are the students of philosophy compared with the students of the physical and phenomenal sciences, yet it is the dominant philosophy of the time which determines chiefly the direction of thought and inquiry. It is therefore a fact of great significance in relation to our present subject, that, as Prof. Knight has told you, "the best and highest thought in Europe is now returning to Kant and his disciples":—that is, to the teaching (in our own country) of Coleridge and Sir W. Hamilton and Professor Maurice, as against Hume and Mill, the Agnostics and Materialists.

"The Unseen Universe" has been written by three of our most eminent and accurate scientific leaders, in this sense, showing that this must, and explaining how it may be. And the efforts of scēptics in the present day are not in general to disprove the existence of a supreme intelligent First Cause. Hume himself, the father I believe of our English sceptics, "as a man of common sense, could not see his way to denying this world must have originated in a designing mind." Mill, who in clearness of thought is

* *Current Coin*, by Haweis.

† Dr Asa Gray, *Pamphlet on Darwinism*.

perhaps his most able successor, but gifted with more earnestness and more openness to conviction, was working his way upward to this conclusion, out of the blank atheism in which his father's iron grasp had plunged him at three years old. In his last work he says that "in the present state of our knowledge the adaptations in nature afford a large balance of probability in favour of Creation by intelligence. Revelation apart, whatever ground there is for believing in an Author of nature is derived from the phenomena in the universe. Their mere resemblance to what man could do, if he had the same power over the materials of organized bodies which he has over the materials of a watch, is of some value as an argument of analogy. But the argument is much strengthened by the properly inductive considerations which establish that there is some connection through causation, between the origin of these arrangements of nature and the ends they fulfil: an argument which in many cases is slight, but in others, and chiefly in the nice and intricate combinations of vegetable and animal life, is of considerable strength." From this whole essay it seems clear he came to the conclusion, not perhaps willingly, that there is a Personal Deity concerned in the arrangements of the universe, of Whose other attributes he was still in doubt.

Professor Tyndall, as we have seen, only attempts to find a supreme cause in his atoms, by endowing them with what ordinary men call intelligent Mind. Even the extreme Atheists, such as Miss Martineau and her teacher, say "we think it nonsense, a mere juggle of words, to profess to disbelieve a First Cause"; although—casting inductive science altogether aside in this connection, they refused to infer the attributes and relations of that First Cause from its effects.

How many able students of natural science have been led by their science to faith in God, time would fail us to say. You remember how Newton wrote: "This beautiful system of sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being....Blind metaphysical necessity, which is the same always and everywhere, could produce no variety of things. All that diversity of natural things which we find, could arise from nothing but the counsel and will of a Being necessarily existing."

Charles Kingsley's physiological studies taught him the same lesson: "My doctrine has been for years—that below all Natural Phenomena we come to a transcendental, in plain English, to a miraculous ground. This belief was forced upon me by investigating the generation of certain polypes of a very low order. I found absolutely Divine Miracle at the bottom of it, and no cause save that of a supremely imaginative (if I may so speak) as well as Almighty Mind carrying out its own idea. But gravitation or the simplest law will show the same truth. What efficient cause is there that all matter should attract matter? why should it not repel matter? The only answer is, God has so willed. And if we come to final causes, there is no better than the Old Mystic one; —God has imprest the law of love, the law of His own being, on matter, to make it the type of the spiritual world and the kingdom of Heaven*."

And again he speaks of "that nameless, invisible, imponderable, yet seemingly omnipresent thing, which scientific men are finding below all phenomena which the scalpel and microscope can show,—that unknown and truly miraculous element in nature, the mystery of

* *Life of C. Kingsley*, Vol. 2, p. 66. Letter to Sir W. Cope.

"which, ever engrossing as it does the noblest-minded of our students of science, is yet escaping them while they cannot escape it....This perpetual and omnipresent miracle, is no other than the Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life*."

"Science has done much in these days to convince us of the reality of an unseen and eternal world. Its various discoveries are so many stepping-stones as it were from the visible to the invisible. The precept to look not at the things that are seen but at the things that are not seen, is confirmed by the abundant evidence and striking illustrations of modern science," and tells us "we must seek behind and beyond the visible and the tangible for the secret of our being†."

"The multiplication of effects from a single cause involves at each step the combination of many causes in the production of each single effect....For the development of the various forms of organic life,—each true to its own permanent type,—from undistinguishable germs, —we can assign no cause at all except the One Cause. The Creative Idea is the only thing which could possibly contain wrapped up within itself all these results and intricate harmonies‡."

We may sum up in the words of Prof. Allmann:—"All science is but the intercalation of successive causes, each more comprehensive than that which it has to account for, between the great Primal Cause and the final effect. For the Cause of these Causes we seek in vain among the Physical Causes which surround us; till we are at last obliged to rest upon an independent volition, a far-seeing, intelligent Design."

* "Theology of the Future," *Westminster Sermons*, quoted in *Life*.

† *Bible Teaching*, Preface. Dr Hugh Macmillan.

‡ *Basis of Faith*. Conder.

LECTURE IV.

EVIDENCES OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD AS THE DIVINE FIRST CAUSE.

"Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar shalt thou go."

WE considered last week the demonstration of the reality or existence of a great First Cause; and the inferences to be drawn as to the character of that Cause, so far as this is manifested to us by the marks of far-seeing intelligent Purpose, found in the effects. We found also that for the most part our opponents agree with us in maintaining that there is a First Cause of the Universe, and of ourselves as parts of the Universe. Most agree also in inferring intelligent design as a part of that First Cause; though some, as Miss Martineau,—casting aside for this occasion deductive science,—refuse to go so far,—refuse to infer any qualities or attributes of the First Cause from any marks or registers of qualities discovered in the results. To this refusal we can pay no attention: it is illegitimate, for it can only be maintained on grounds which would be fatal to all inference and all Science.

In proceeding with our inquiry to-day, it will be necessary to bear in mind that we have made our appeal to experience, and to just inference from experience. For in some of the objections we shall have to consider, and

indeed often in arguments on this whole subject, there is a tacit assumption that religious facts are *à priori* so improbable or so uncertain, that almost any account of the Universe which excludes a Living God and Divine Originator, Sustainer, and Ruler, that can be regarded as even conceivably possible, is to be accepted, rather than a far more consistent and reasonable account, which includes His presence and recognizes His actual rule. They say "Science binds us to accept natural causes, as long as we possibly can, in preference to a supernatural one." There is no doubt a sense in which this is true. When we are engaged in finding out the method, or succession of causes, which results in the individual phenomenon, we leave the succession incomplete if we pass at once from the final result to the Ultimate Cause.

But, speaking from experience, what we say is this: the natural cause of motion is energy; the natural cause of intelligent design is thought, choice and will. To substitute for these three either mass or motion, is to substitute an unnatural for a natural cause.

In answering all this class of objections you must ask for a definition of the words 'natural' and 'supernatural.' Is the intervention of mind in the regulation and direction of physical agencies a natural or a supernatural cause? If it be a natural antecedent in the construction of a telescope, then it is a natural one in the organization of an eye. When we appeal to experience, we set aside all *à priori* assumptions: we ask, not what before knowing the data we should consider the most probable,—but what after examining the facts is the most reasonable explanation or method of their occurrence. When we appeal to experience, we must take its facts as they are and for what they are worth; without weighting them on one side or the

other by any *à priori* obligations to physical science or to religious beliefs.

Among the firstfruits of experience we found this: that every phenomenon we witness is referred by us to a corresponding reality or entity; and that every relation we observe is a mark of two entities related: in other words that properties imply substances, and relations things related. This axiom is in truth a corollary from the axiom (the truth of which all science assumes and without which all its vocation were gone)—that every event that happens has an antecedent cause for happening.

We have seen also that the inevitable consequence of thus accepting causation, in any form, as the law of our present Universe, is to lead us up, logically, to a First or Ultimate Cause, preceding all Universes and existing from Eternity. And if, laying aside logical conclusions, we refuse to attend to aught but the actual sequences and antecedents given us by experience, then among the antecedent phenomena of the present condition of the universe, we must include preexisting intelligence, imagination, skill and volition. And these are known to us as the marks of living Persons, not of material substances.

What we have to consider to-day are the relations in which we find ourselves consciously placed, and what are the just inferences we must draw from those relations, as to the character of the Co-relative.

This is the inquiry which directs all secular science, and constitutes its main object. Take for example the astronomer: he observes all the motions of the planet Mars, in order to discover the relations indicated by those motions. He calculates the exact effect of the sun, of Jupiter, of all the other known bodies that modify its motions, and so foretells its exact course. Further observation

shows a slight deflection from that course. He knows that the cause of this deflection must be, there is yet another relation in which Mars stands, the co-relative of which is not known. But he is sure it is there because relations are marks of things related. So he calculates the amount of the deflection, estimates the force required to effect it, the direction, and the comparative distance from which it has come: and he says, "There is a planet, of such a magnitude, in or close to that spot in the heavens, and it must be watched for at such a time and under such and such conditions": and there the new planet is presently discovered to be.

Now this reasoning from relations to things related, which is the valid and necessary process in secular knowledge, is equally valid in moral and religious inquiries.

We have then already found one relation in which we ourselves stand to the First Cause, the Creative Mind. We are ourselves, individually, the effects or creatures of that Creative mind and will. And we assert the real Existence of that Creative mind, on the same grounds on which we assert the existence of ourselves and of other men and women about us.

In proceeding to inquire into the character, the attributes of this great First Cause, we must consider what other relations we actually find ourselves placed in, and infer the character of the Co-relative from them, as the astronomer inferred the character of his new planet from its results in Mars' movements. And the next chain of argument, which discloses to us another attribute, is from the presence of Conscience within us. Our consciousness of a moral law binding on ourselves and on all men, leads us to infer the existence of a moral authority, or lawgiver: otherwise we should find ourselves placed in moral rela-

tions without any cause or Co-relative; which is impossible. "This sense is found in the earliest dawns of thought and feeling in the heart of a child, and grows with its growth." It may be roused in him in various ways;—the sense of injustice done to himself by another; the grave look of displeasure at wrong done by him;—just as consciousness is roused, not given, by some first sensation. And just as we interpret our sensations into all the phenomena of an objective world; so do we interpret this sense of right and of wrong, into an objective law binding on ourselves and others. Once awakened we can no more get rid of this inner voice, than we can of our belief in real existence as underlying all phenomena. The child may be taught to believe things to be wrong which are indifferent or right: he may be taught to believe actions to be right which are very wrong: that is to say, he may mistake in applying this moral distinction to the particular circumstances of any given case or class of cases. By long habit he may become quite indifferent to the difference: ceasing to attend to it he becomes blunted to it, just as we all become blunted to and cease to attend to many habitual sensations. But when attention to it is roused by a wrong done to himself or to those dear to him, the distinction between right and wrong comes back, he makes it intuitively. And yet this distinction, which we use as the measure of all moral, self-determined actions, is an utterly groundless one, unless it has a moral authority, outside and independent of our own conscience. It places us, consciously, in a moral relation—to whom? "The will or practical reason, with this unchangeable law of obligation, is a fact of the human consciousness and no more. Why then has one part of my constitution, as such, an imperative authority over the remainder? What right has one

“part of the human consciousness to call itself duty, and
 “to represent another as merely inclination?—Man can be
 “a law to himself only on the supposition, that he reflects
 “in himself the law of God.—We are thus compelled by
 “the consciousness of moral obligation to postulate a
 “moral Deity*.” And again, Dr Martineau writes: “The
 “authority which decides what is right and wrong, just
 “and unjust, is not, as we are well aware, of our own
 “making: it masters us with compunction and defies all
 “appeal. It issues from a source transcending human life,
 “and infuses into it a moral order from a more compre-
 “hensive sphere. It postulates a superior will in com-
 “munion with ours, and administering this world as a
 “school of character.” He goes on to show that no less
 Cause than this can be an adequate cause for the claims
 that conscience actually makes upon us. “Till this con-
 clusion is reached, the ethical demands upon us, address
 “us in tones too portentous for their immediate signifi-
 “cance; remorse clings to us with a tenacity, aspiration
 “returns upon us with a power, which reason cannot ade-
 “quately justify. In the presence of an objective moral
 “law of the Universe, administered by a Mind in which it
 “perfectly lives, and continued for man beyond his present
 “term of years, the scale of the ethical passion, and the in-
 “tensity of admiration and reverence for the good, fall into
 “proportionate place, as the ultimate nobleness and not
 “as the supreme extravagance of our nature†.” Another
 writer says, “The most naturalistic thinkers cannot, and do
 “not pretend to, dispense with the idea of duty: that is, they
 “are compelled to recognize an invisible spiritual authority,
 “whether they will confess it in words or not.” All they

* Mansel's *Metaphysics*, § Ontology, p. 377.

† “Modern Symposium,” *Nineteenth Century*, April 1877.

attempt to do is to account for this imperative sense of duty, this spiritual authority demanding the submission of our wills, in the sequent phenomena of our consciousness, without a supreme Spiritual Authority in the Antecedent Cause.

The chief and most consistent account of this kind, is the Utilitarian theory of ethics; but it makes no real difference here, for it is a theory of the method in which the law of conscience has been embodied in our nature, not of the Ultimate cause of its evolution. Nor is it an adequate amount of the moral relations in which we actually find ourselves. It is certain that the sense of right and wrong is at the present time distinct in our minds from the sense of useful and hurtful. Some actions, and many things of the highest utility, have no moral character whatever; whilst actions which in their immediate effects are not only useless but disastrous, conscience classifies as sublimely virtuous. The invention of a machine which gives new life to a country has no moral character: the refusal to betray a trust, which may involve a continent in all the miseries of a most disastrous war, may have the very highest moral character.

The kind of sublimated utility which Mill maintains to be the true law of conscience, is indeed identical in its results with the sense of justice, mercy, and truth given us in conscience. But it is a utility so remote from all immediate experiences of useful and hurtful, that the only way a plain man could take, practically to determine what line of conduct in each case that comes up for decision would be the most useful, would be to ask, what is just? what is true? what should I wish my neighbour to do to me? The fact of this absolute coincidence of the truest social utilities with moral righteousnesses in the results,

only throws us back on the fact that the moral cosmos in which we find ourselves is, on the whole and in the long run, righteously governed; and that even the physical laws which concern the prosperity of men are bent in the same direction. It is quite impossible to imagine that we ourselves, that humanity, that our Father-man, so govern and bend them. And as for its being governed by the common sense of mankind—it is not men that create utilities: and far the larger majority govern, if they govern at all, in their own immediate, temporary and therefore false interests.

Besides why am I bound to act for the general utility of mankind? why may I not consider only what is best and pleasantest for myself? Because the law of duty lies behind general utility, making it an unjust thing for me to sacrifice the good of the many to my own, and binding that law of justice on my conscience.

The attempt to account for the phenomena of Conscience, by the assertion that social impressions and associations predominate over selfish ones, fails in the same way. The social instincts are not identical with the right as given us in conscience; neither are the self-regarding instincts identical generally speaking with the wrong. The social instincts often incline us to go peacefully and lovingly with the multitude to do evil. Conscience continually commands us to break off from, resist, and disobey these social instincts, to do violence to our social affections. But if this hypothesis should prove true, the question, why this righteous part of our nature is made to predominate over the unrighteous part, would still remain, driving us back upon a righteous First Cause.

Neither does it make any difference here whether this moral sense of duty came to us by inheritance, slowly

evolved by associations and brain vibrations and long experiences of utilities in ancestral germs, or whether it is imparted to each human soul directly by God. For the method of its coming is not the cause of its having come. The First Cause, which caused us,—whether by direct creation or by indirect creative evolution,—potentially caused us to have this light of conscience. You cannot believe it is a false light, a groundless distinction: you cannot help receiving it as an objective law, not only for yourself but for other men. “Thus from the very nature of the case,” Dr Newman urges, “the very existence of conscience carries on our minds to a Being exterior to ourselves, else whence its strange and troublesome pertinacity?”

The argument has been put into another form. We have no experience of love, justice, truth, except as qualities of persons,—that is to say, of living beings possessed of reason and will. We never do and never can associate them in any way or degree with material substances or physical forces. Reason as we may, we have those ideas, and they must have their cause, their beginning and their perfection: and they must have it in a living mind and will. And that is God.

“No Ethical conceptions are possible at all, except as floating shreds of unattached thought, without a religious background. And the sense of responsibility, the agony of shame, the inner reverence for justice, first find their meaning and their justification in a supreme holiness that rules the world.” And referring to the inevitable corollary of conscience, “that the distinction of right and wrong is valid for all free beings, and incapable of local or arbitrary change,” this writer adds; “This Unity in the moral law, carries us to the Unity of the Divine Legisla-

“tor. Theism is thus the indispensable postulate of con-
 “science, its objective counterpart and justification; with-
 “out which its inspirations would be illusions, and its
 “veracities itself a lie*.”

Once more; if we take the facts given us by experience as our only data, we have no surer testimony of men’s experience, and of the uniform working of their minds and mental instincts, than that given in language. Now what does this word Conscience testify? It is the same word as the Greek *suneidesis*. “According to the very notation of “it, it imports a double or joint knowledge: to wit one of a “divine law, the other of a man’s own action†.” The German ‘Gewissen’ may express the certainty of this knowledge.

There is another consciousness, common to all men, which, as we believe, has been given us to lead us all to God. It is the consciousness of our own dependence: the consciousness of our standing in this relation strongly demands its co-relative. “With the first developement of “consciousness, there grows up as a part of it, the innate “feeling that our life, natural and spiritual, is not in our “own power to prolong and to sustain. That there is one “above us (it may be more than one) on Whom we are “dependent, Whose existence we learn and Whose presence “we realize by the sure instinct of prayer. That this “feeling is natural to us, is manifested by the almost “universal practice of mankind.—We have then in this “sense of our dependence, the psychological foundation of “one great element of religion,—the fear of God‡.” It seems probable that this sense of dependence may be the

* *Church Quarterly*, “Scepticism of the Day,” July 1876.

† Dr South’s Sermons.

‡ Mansel’s *Metaphysics*, § Ontology.

fruit of experience and its associations: still the fact remains, the universal experiences and associations of mankind are such, that they inevitably lead us up to God. And this cannot be by chance, for science excludes chance, which is merely a form of non-causation.

This sense of dependence, with the instinct of prayer, as also the sense of sin, are included amongst what are now recognized as 'men's religious instincts.' These are experiences of internal consciousness which it is acknowledged are common to mankind: Comtists and worshippers of our Father-man alike, acknowledge their presence, and their potency. "No one," writes Mr F. Harrison, "can disinherit us of religion:—a religion which shall bring us face to face with a Power to which we must bow, with a Providence which we must love and serve; with a Being which we must adore: that which, in fine, gives man a doctrine to believe, a discipline to live by, and an object to worship*." We shall have to return to this passage again, in answering objections. I have quoted it here as a fair description of those "religious instincts" the real presence of which in us is not denied and which cannot be accounted for,—in harmony with all that we know of the orderly correlation that reigns in our present cosmos, except as marks in us of relations, which demand their co-relative out of us.

And now we turn to another fact: not only are these religious instincts placed in us; but there is that in the material world without us which is directly calculated to call them out, into active consciousness and exercise. The outer physical and material universe is not only in relation with us as to our physical life: it is also in relation to our intellectual life, it is to us a revelation exciting, stimulating

* Mr F. Harrison, *Nineteenth Century*, "Modern Symposium."

and feeding all our mental faculties; and it stands in the like relation to our religious instincts, arousing, enlarging, and directing them upwards to God. What else than this is the meaning of the beauty of nature and of its effects on us?

"Nature has two great revelations to minds constituted like ours, the first of use, the second of beauty.

"Note first. These two are united in their source. "Nature is beautiful by the selfsame material and laws by which she is useful,—the beauty of a gorgeous sunset arises from those atmospheric laws of heat and light, whence also its use arises. Thus in the very act of labouring as a machine, she sleeps as a picture.

"Note second. These two are totally separate in themselves: no possible connection can be discovered between the two co-existences. The utility has a complete end in itself,—and all the creatures equally profit by it, whether they understand it or not. But the beauty is nothing unless it is seen, and it is visible to reason alone. Thus we have in the very structure of inanimate nature a recognition of reason, and a distinct address to reason, wholly unaccountable unless there is a higher reason or mind to which we may refer it."—"This beauty has a direct effect on worship and the religious sentiment. —The beauty of nature is necessary for the perfection of praise—it stands on the threshold of the mystical world, and excites a curiosity about God....It makes nature symbolical: we cannot regard the beauty and grandeur of nature as stopping with itself, but as bearing relation to something moral, of which it is the similitude and type. This association is so universal, that we cannot even describe nature without the help of moral terms*.

* That is, this association is so far universal, as to have been ineffaceably recorded in language; reversing here the usual order, by which moral

"This beauty and grandeur fills the mind with awe, and silences the disquiet of the soul. But physical grandeur, taken by itself, is merely so many feet of height and depth, so many masses, angles, projections, vapours, colours, spaces, details of dry fact, wearying not resting. To give it the power of imparting this awe—(may we not add 'this yearning love'?)—there must be a radical association in our minds, of physical greatness with the Divine Being above us. Taken by itself it is merely matter; addressed to our minds, it becomes to us the sign and type of God's character, an indirect language."... "If no people have ever existed to whom the sky has not suggested one set of ideas;

"If God has always spoken with one voice in the awe and solemnity of the thunder.

"If love, joy, peace, hope, have attached to the same features of nature everywhere.

"If there is a general agreement in these impresses, and they proceed inevitably from God's own work in the construction of our minds,—then there is language. The Deity has created in nature an universal language about Himself and addressed it to our reason, its features convey signals from a distant country; and man is placed in communication with a great Correspondent, whose tablet he interprets*."

and spiritual ideas are clothed in words taken from sensible things and movements. As in this sunset scene.

"The *holy* time is quiet as a nun

"*Breathless with adoration*: the broad sun

"Is sinking down in its *tranquillity*;

"The *gentleness* of heaven broods o'er the sea."

* I would refer the reader to the sermon itself from whence this is quoted, "*University Sermons*," by the late Professor Mozley. Long as the above quotation is, I feel how much the strength of the argument has been weakened by being summarized. See note C.

You will remember that the revelation thus made in nature's beauty and grandeur is not an isolated fact. What are they telling us, who bid us take Force for our God, and physical science for our only revelation of that God? That it is revealing to us a universe full of order, guided by law ; a universe in its whole and in every minutest part so accurately and exquisitely correlated together, that its contemplation is, they say, for us a sufficient moral training. It reveals to us in every phenomenon it has as yet solved, the unmistakeable marks of power, design, foresight, skill, and patience. It shows us the whole visible universe saturated through and through with these marks, revelations to minds like ours of the Creator's character. Again,

Certainly conscience is an internal consciousness, and does reveal to us a moral law. A moral law so inevitably suggests a moral lawgiver, that the idea of the first includes the second. Moral responsibility is one-half of a relation, and is impossible unless it has its causal correlative—a moral not-self, above self, having the right to direct and judge us. Hence the sense of duty inherent in our constitution is a revelation of that Supreme Intelligence which we have recognised as the First Cause of our existence. It is not a complete Revelation, but it tells us, in a language common to all mankind, that of internal consciousness, what He desired us to be, and to do.

You see it is a simple matter of fact that these three revelations are addressed to our minds, and that our minds are constituted to receive them. They force themselves on our attention, they excite our interest, they urge us onward step by step, exercising all our mental faculties, enlarging our spiritual capacities, commanding us to be true, just, and merciful. And this fact is a further revelation to us of the Creator's will and purpose concerning us. It tells us

He desires our upward progress ; that He designs to reveal something of Himself to us*.

Now there are well-known rules of judgment, whereby from such data as these we can infer with moral certainty much of the attributes and the moral disposition of the Supreme First Cause : just as from data of the same kind we can and do daily infer the character, the moral and mental qualities of men whom we never saw, whose names we never heard, and whose very existence is only known to us by inference from those of their works which remain to us.

And now if we turn from these *à posteriori* arguments, to the *à priori* assertion of the Agnostics, that we cannot know God, and consequently, whether He exist or not, we can know nothing about Him or our own relations to Him ; you will, I think, readily see the fallacy involved. The fallacy of the Atheists who declared 'there is no God,' was that to justify such an assertion it would be necessary to have infinite knowledge. The Agnostics who only assert 'God is unknowable,' avoid this glaring fallacy ; but only, as it seems, to fall into another†. For, i. they begin by asserting, we are invincibly and necessarily ignorant of God, and of His relations to us. They must then go on to assert, unless they mean to beg the question, ii. that we are unable to infer anything of the character of God and of

* By the use of these pronouns we seem to assume the Personality of the First Cause before proving it. I do not wish to assume anything, but in speaking of the source of 'purpose,' 'will,' 'righteousness,' and 'intelligence,' there is such an incongruity in the use of impersonal or neuter pronouns, as would suggest ludicrous ideas.

† Here, again, we note that scepticism has sustained a defeat. Is it unfair to say, that in falling back from positive Atheism to negative Agnosticism, it has made one of those "strategical movements to the rear"—which afford to the dispassionate on-looker a sure indication which is the winning side?

His disposition toward us, from His works ; and iii. that God is either unable or unwilling to reveal Himself or anything concerning Himself to us.

But the first and third are irreconcilable. If I do not know anything of God, I cannot know what He is able or what He is willing to reveal. And as for the second,—why this special imbecility should attack us just at this point, and on this subject alone, who can say ?

For certainly, so far as we know, there are no relations in which we can be placed that are beyond our apprehension. The correlative may easily be beyond our direct observation ; may only be discoverable to us by inference : but from the nature of the relation itself we cannot help inferring to some extent what the correlative must be. For example, we find we are as to our life in the relation of dependance. Our consciousness of this relation will not discover to us what it is we depend on. But if this were revealed, or discovered in any way, our knowledge of that relation would be as complete as of any other. In the nature of things the child can have no knowledge of his parents or of their disposition towards him, if they never discover themselves to him : yet from his knowledge of the wants which parents supply he could and would infer a good deal of what parents might be to him.

This argument against Agnosticism has been stated in another form by the Dean of Manchester :

“Agnosticism affirms that the subjects treated of by our Revelation are not within the powers of our minds : and that we are deluded when we think that we know anything of them because they are absolutely unknowable. This assumes

“i. that the powers of the human mind are all known and defined ; which is not true.

"ii. That the things propounded to our minds by "Revelation are all known: for until we know what they "are we cannot tell whether they are knowable or not," (one of the singular contradictions which attend the rash use of general negatives).

Their argument proceeds thus:

- i. We cannot know what we do not comprehend.
- ii. We cannot comprehend what is infinite.
- iii. Therefore we can know nothing about what is infinite,—a *non sequitur*.

- i. God is infinite.

- ii. We cannot comprehend Him.

- iii. We cannot know anything about Him.

"But if we know He is infinite, we do know one fact "about Him*."

'Infinite' being a merely negative notion, "no limit "or bounds," we cannot agree with this last proposition in the form in which the Dean has left it: for a negative notion is no notion. But apply the Agnostic syllogisms to our ideas of time and space; it is impossible for us to conceive that either is limited: for the moment we try to assign a limit, we ask "what of the extension beyond "that limit? what of the time before and after?"

Thus we think of both as infinite.

But what is infinite is incomprehensible,

And of what is incomprehensible we can know nothing.

Therefore we can know nothing of time and space. Whereas our most certain sciences are built up of what we do know of their relations. It may be said that what we deal with in geometry and algebra are definite portions of number and space, not infinite or absolute but relative.

* *Causes of Unbelief*: Papers by the Dean of Manchester, Oct. 1877.

But so it is also in religious truth. God's relations to finite beings as ourselves are not as He is, absolute, unconditioned, or infinite, but definite and conditioned: and His revelations have progressively unfolded to us so much of His purposes for us and of our relations to Him as we are able, step by step, to comprehend.

Nor is there any real difficulty in comprehending how this can be. That we who are always conditioned and finite can never comprehend the unconditioned and absolute, is apparently certain. But the assertion we are now dealing with really amounts to this, that the unconditioned Absolute and Infinite can never enter into definite relations and conditions with finite beings like ourselves, or hold any communication with our minds. And this is not only utterly groundless, it is self-contradictory. Such a disability would be itself a condition and a limitation: it is tantamount to the assertion that as the finite cannot include the infinite, so the infinite cannot include the finite.

In reference to our own finite knowledge, the Dean goes on, "Because we are far from comprehending or fully explaining the nature of any object: we do not on that account cease from endeavouring to know more, nor as much as we can. A limited comprehension is within our reach, and stands between absolute knowledge," which is beyond us, 'and absolute ignorance,' in which the Author of our being has made it impossible for us to remain.

There are other objections of the same negative character as this put into different forms, to which the answer is of the same character. Mr Leslie Stephens* throws the negative argument into a positive and dogmatic form: one could wish he had asserted less and tried to prove more.

* *English Thought in the 18th Century.*

The assertion we are at present concerned with is that all arguments for the Being of God are invalid, because contradictory: the name of 'God' being the only thing they have in common, and this being used to cover radically inconsistent conceptions.

There is a confusion here of two things that are really quite distinct. What God is, is not the same question as whether He is. What He is, in His entirety, is beyond our present faculties to comprehend; "that He is, that 'there 'is a Being beyond phenomena,' from Whom this universe "proceeded, is as certain a proposition as that anything "is*."

"The name of God, Mr Stephens alleges, covers every "idea, from an idol to the infinite nature of Spinoza. What "he means is that the Being reached by Ontological "evidence is not the same Being as that reached by the "evidence from Design†. The argument from ontology "gives an Infinite Being: it does not follow that Being is "without intelligence because that argument does not "prove intelligence. The evidence from design proves an "intelligent Creator: it does not follow this Creator is im- "perfect and finite because this argument from final causes "does not prove He is infinite. These two conceptions of "God are not inconsistent, but two different aspects of "Deity: the last tells us He is a person; the first, that He

* Notes on *English Thought*, in *Contemporary Review*, by W. Hunt, Feb. 1877.

† I ought perhaps to say, that Ontology has to do with those realities, the presence of which is given us in consciousness, of which we have spoken as existences, substances, ens; i.e. the permanent realities that are "standing under" those changing properties or relations which discover them to our minds and indicate to us their nature. The line of argument from Ontology is, these finite realities must have their cause in the ultimate and supreme Reality.

"is not limited as human personality is limited.—Mr Stephens is converting negatives into positives: because "an argument does not prove a certain proposition, therefore it proves the contrary." Again you see the same fallacy. Mr L. Stephens asserts that the worship of nature cannot be made to square with the worship of Jehovah, and apparently finds traces of the former among the Israelites. "But," Mr Hunt argues, "if we want to get the "Bible idea of God, we must take the higher and more "worthy conceptions of Bible writers. The book of Job, "one of the earliest, shows the nation then had these "conceptions of God as the Eternal and Infinite.—The "Hebrew name for God is an abstraction, and enters into "the deepest metaphysics. Yet the God of Israel was a "living Being, in Whom will, wisdom, and all that constitutes Personality are among the chief attributes. The "very name 'I am,' which is said to be the same as "Jehovah,' suggests the identity of the God revealed to "Moses, with the Deity of Plato* and the Ontological "philosophers."

There are others who accepting God, would have us accept an Impersonal Deity, or would substitute some other name, as 'Nature,' 'Humanity,' our 'Father-man,' for the Living and Righteous One. Now the notions they propose to us are so vague that it is difficult to get any such hold of them as may enable us to examine whether they really answer the needs of the case.

'An Impersonal God' is unintelligible: 'God' here stands as the name of an unknown something, the only attribute of which is 'impersonal:' and that is a negative notion, i. e. it is no notion. Before we can have any notion at all what the writer is speaking of, we must have at

* To On.

least one positive attribute given us. If there be a God,—such as ‘force’ or ‘matter’ or ‘the Universe,’—which is impersonal; then the hypothesis explains not one of all those phenomena in which the marks of intelligence, forethought, adaptation and volition are so indelibly impressed. Neither ‘force’ nor ‘matter,’ can be accepted as ‘true causes’ of these marks.

‘Nature’ is merely a general term for the whole sum of the changing phenomena of the visible world. Nature as a cause or as an object of worship is a mere figure of speech, a personification: and this, as Dr. Abbot tells us,* “is the ‘creation (by our own imagination) of a fictitious person, ‘in order to account for i. Psychological, and ii. Obscure ‘Physical Phenomena.’”

Not less intangible and unreal are the notions presented to us by the Comtists, as the basis of what they tell us is their new religion. I take Mr. Fred. Harrison’s account of them: he certainly is a writer who can think and write clearly enough when he is telling us of real facts and definite ideas. It may be my own deficiency that I can find no fact and no idea at all in the words in which he describes this substitute for the Living God and the Christian religion. But his own words I can give you. To begin with, he agrees with Christians that “no one can or shall “disinherit us of religion: a religion which shall teach us “of a paramount power outside us, to struggle with which “is confusion and annihilation, to work with which is “happiness and strength;” then follows the passage I have quoted above, page 95, in which he tells us this religion must give us a “Power to bow down to, a Providence to “love and obey, a Being we must adore, a doctrine to “believe, a discipline to live by, and an object to worship.”

* *English Lessons for English People*, p. 82.

He fully agrees, then, with us that Religion is the knowledge of, and on our own part the fulfilment of, certain relations in which we actually find ourselves. And so far all that he says of our Correlative in these religious relations is exactly what Christians will say. He goes on to describe the difference between Comtists and Christians thus: "What is new in *our scheme* is merely that we avoid such terms as infinite, absolute, immaterial, and all vague negations, confining ourselves wholly to the sphere of 'what is relative and wholly and frankly human.'" In a subsequent paper* he gives a further explanation of 'our scheme.' As it is he says impossible to have a religion resting on the belief in God, he proposes to have in its place a religion resting on the belief in man, and got out of a "new synthesis, a human synthesis, to explain what ever belongs to man and from man's point of view." He acknowledges that the religious relations are real human relations, but in this last paper he seems more plainly to intimate what was only suggested in the expression 'what is 'new in our scheme'—that we have to invent the correlative, and make a scheme of our own for the purpose of obtaining one. A religion resting on the belief in man, makes man his own correlative: a religion resting on 'a new synthesis' is scarcely intelligible.

The Christian, then, believes his faith has been taught him "at sundry times and in diverse manners" by the Power and Providence of the Being Whom he serves and adores. The Comtist speaks of *his* faith as his own scheme. The Christian believes in the real Power and Providence of the Divine Being: the Comtist in "a power, Providence, "and Being that is wholly and frankly human." We might ask whether it is wholly human, in the sense of rational, to

* *Nineteenth Century*, Oct. 1890.

believe in a Power exercising, a Providence providing, without any real Being to exercise that power or to provide; or to believe in a Relative which we must adore, but whose real objective existence we are to deny.

If he means that this Power, Providence and Being are really human power, human providence and human existence, then it must be a power and providence exercised by the whole mass of concrete individual men and women which constitutes the human race: and these are the 'Being,' ourselves being among the number, whom we are to bow to, obey and adore. In this case the answer is, we simply cannot do anything of the kind. The more we learn of the moral conduct and condition of the mass of mankind, the more we know of ourselves, the less is it possible to obey, trust to, or adore such. But that they fill us with the profoundest compassion, learnt from Christ, they must surely fill us with loathing.

Nor is it otherwise with those modern substitutes for the Living and True God,—the worship of humanity or of man in the abstract. What do we mean by these two words, or by that pleasanter term our Father-man? I do not ask what personification springs up into our minds under that name—what vague fiction of a misty gigantesque ancestral form, looking down with benevolent interest on us his very little children; I mean what is its value in accurate science? mere metaphor. Man in the abstract, humanity, our Father-man, are general and abstract terms, the names not of objective realities but of certain subjective notions, which the infirmity and limitation of our memory and power of attention compel us to use. To fancy there is anything in the Cosmos answering to these abstract and incomplete ideas, is to create a fictitious person: to adore it is to adore the subjective result of our

own imperfection; to obey it, is to obey our own notion; to trust in it, is to trust to a nonentity—an idol of the schools.

And now let us take, as an example of other hypotheses, Prof. Clifford's account of Conscience. We agree that we must have, to justify and to explain the demands of conscience, some cause for conscience, and some authority for its demands. Prof. Clifford gives it us thus: "The voice of conscience is the voice of our Father-man who is within us; the accumulated instinct of the race is poured into each one of us and overflows us. Our evidence for this explanation is, i. that the cause assigned is a *vera causa*, it undoubtedly exists: ii. And those who have tried it tell us it is sufficient; the explanation of the fact covers the whole field of our moral sense."

As to the 1st clause, there is a little confusion in it; the fact that the accumulated instinct of the race is poured into each one of us might 'exist' as a real fact, without our being one whit nearer the conclusion, that it is the *vera causa* of conscience. No one ever doubted that Tenterden Steeple does exist; but few have admitted it is the *vera causa* of the sandbank.

However it is a real and sufficient cause. Now our Father-man is not a real cause, on account of his not existing: he is a figure of speech. The human race is a general term denoting all the individual men who have lived, are living, and will live, and connoting successive generations; no single human being that ever lived is the product of the whole human race. The accumulated voice of our own individual ancestors may by heredity be poured into each of us—it is a mere hypothesis; but this could not possibly be a law binding not only on myself and my family but on every other race. But the voice of con-

science is this, or nothing. Its essence is that right and wrong are real distinctions, and binding on all men alike.

Nor does this explanation cover the whole field. If the accumulated instincts of our race are the rule of right and wrong, why should we draw so sharp and broad a distinction between those accumulated instincts which are right and those which we consider wrong? cruelty, fighting, selfishness, the love of tyrannical power, are all accumulated instincts, are all the voice of our Father-man within us: and it is at least certain they do overflow us, in the most unjust and abominable actions, filling us not with adoration but with shame and confusion of face.

Then this theory is contradictory. It refers us back for our highest properties to the ancestral generations who have preceded us, whilst it represents the accumulating instincts of later generations as the highest law we can have: instead then of listening to the voice of our Father-man, the voice of our own generation must be the highest law we can have, and the voice of the generations that are succeeding us is the more perfect law.

Lastly, this hypothesis does not explain the whole problem of conscience. It gives us no answer to the question, How did that instinct begin? what caused it, and its accumulation in the direction of conscience? whence does this distinction derive its authority? and why is it more binding on me than animal instincts are? In like manner the religion of humanity fails to meet the whole case of our religious instincts or relations. E.g. The human race is consciously dependant, and hence the instinct of prayer. Certainly it is not dependant on that portion of it which is now living—that is the dependant portion. We cannot now be dependant on the future, and possibly nobler, men, women, and children who may live: for at

present they are non-existing. Certainly we are not now dependant on the preceding generations, who are dead, and on Mr Harrison's and Prof. Clifford's hypotheses, are all annihilated, though their effects remain.

And then in no possible way can it even be imagined to account for the indelible marks of intelligent mind in the visible and the unseen worlds. The human race is a part of the thing caused, not the causer: it cannot be credited with its own mental adaptations or its own creation; still less can it be the cause of the visible Universe, in which it occupies so small a space, and plays so small a part.

Thus these sceptical philosophies "fail to explain to us "the relations of the faculties of the human soul within, of "man to his fellow-men, of man to this world, and its "order."

The philosophy of our Revelation does not fail. Its primary doctrine, the Presence of the Supreme and Living God, originating and directing the whole Universe, and in a special manner caring for and educating His intelligent creatures: and administering the processes of the visible and invisible worlds as—amongst other ends not yet revealed to us—as a school of intelligence and of moral discipline for us, does explain consistently all these series of phenomena which we have as yet considered. It gives us a firm foundation for our exercise of thought; explains the relations of our faculties; gives us that First efficient Cause we cannot but demand; that Authority conscience insists on appealing to; and fits in to our dependant condition.

When we appeal to scientific evidences, we are bound to follow scientific rules. The rule concerning theories is this: "when a theory, based on probable evidence, explains

“consistently one whole chain of phenomena, it is accepted “as the true one.” In the case before us our Divine Revelation of the self-existent living and righteous God, explains consistently not one chain but all those chains of phenomena of our consciousness, our ultimate convictions, our conscience, our religious instincts, our intellectual and our spiritual needs.

“Such a theory can only be rejected by proving it to “be impossible,” which in this case never can be done. “Or by bringing another explanation of the whole mass of “phenomena, which explains them more thoroughly.” This has not been done.

When you have a complex lock with many wards, how do you know the right key? it is no use to bring a key that fits one ward; the true key fits all the wards. So it is here. The key that fits the phenomena of our consciousness, our science, our conscience, our religious relations, is the Existence of the one true and living God, our righteous Lawgiver, Ruler, and Teacher.

PART II.

EVIDENCES OF THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL SCIENCES TO THE TRUTHS OF REVELATION.

LECTURE V.

REVELATIONS OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES COMPARED WITH THOSE OF SCRIPTURE.

"The invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even His eternal Power and Godhead." Rom. i. 20.

"Two worlds are ours"; and both alike,—both the physical and social Cosmos in which we live,—being worlds of orderly sequence, are fit subjects for human science in its two great divisions of physical and moral science.

Physical science investigates the phenomena of the material or visible universe, with a view to discover as far as may be their present order, their past condition, their future developements, and what we, borrowing a figure from our moral world, call the 'laws' that prevail in their succession. You will remember it has two divisions.

i. Physical Science, properly so called, which investigates the relations between natural phenomena and physical antecedents, by the help of mathematics. Dynamical science has already become, and chemistry we are told is rapidly becoming, a branch of this true and demonstrated knowledge.

ii. As precursor and auxiliary to this, Phenomenal

Science: which observes and classifies these natural phenomena and infers by induction their uniform sequences. "As however it is unable to determine these sequences to be the necessary result of the action of physical forces, its conclusions remain merely empirical, until the higher science interprets and demonstrates them." This is the preliminary stage of science: biology and indeed most of our 'ologies' are still in it; and there is an immense amount of work to be done, before they can be ready to enter into the first class, and become demonstrated physical sciences. In weighing evidence it is necessary to bear this distinction in mind. When a scientific student says, 'my science proves that such or such a statement of Scripture is erroneous'; we must ask him to which of these two classes his science belongs, and if it is merely phenomenal, we must bid him wait till he can demonstrate his work, before he uses it to contradict that which rests on other evidence than his science deals with. And now we have to consider how far the evidence of physical science can fairly be expected to go, towards the proof or disproof of any of the great facts of our Revelation as we find them recorded in the Bible. "The Bible," as Maurice wrote, "has a different subject-matter from natural science: it has to do with human life and human relations; and with the Cosmos of physical things, their growth and decay, only as these are related to men. But natural science is occupied with the history of physical things, and with man only as a part of these: his moral and social life does not concern the physical student*."

Hence the evidence of Physical Science against the main truths of our Revelation can be only negative. It might be able to say, "We find no marks of antecedent

* *Bible and Science.*

"mind in any of these physical phenomena; they yield us "no signs of adaptation, of anticipation, of design. So "far as we at present know, physical forces working "mechanically and chemically have gone on without any "commencement in time, and without any breach of continuity, and are quite sufficient to account for the physical "phenomena we have as yet investigated, without postulating "any such Creative will, or any such directing and controlling Providence as the Scriptures tell us of." And this is all it could say. It is for ever impossible for Physical Science to disprove the creative and controlling power of God, because, as we have seen, that would be to prove a negative in a case in which nothing short of infinite knowledge can establish it. Neither can Physical Science tell us whether mental and moral phenomena can be accounted for without postulating a Divine Thinker and Lawgiver; because it does not investigate these phenomena: its method of demonstration by mathematical calculation, and its instruments of observation,—its microscopes, telescopes and analyzing tubes,—are not applicable to them.

And as the evidence of the physical sciences against the great facts of our Revelation would be very limited, and confined rather to their accessories than to their substance, so also the evidence they can bear to Revelation is strictly limited. It may be of three kinds.

First. Physical Science might testify that "the "conclusions to which we are led, are consistent with "the main facts asserted in the Bible, on those points "where they cover the same ground as ours." It might show us,

Secondly. That Physical Science is not sufficient for itself: that it cannot give any complete account of its own sets of phenomena, of their origin or their continuity: but

that the facts stated by Revelation would fit in with its own account, completing and uniting its parts into one consistent whole, and giving the key to its own inexplicable breaks.

Thirdly. Physical Science might show us that kind of analogy between the physical government of the material world, and the moral government of the moral world as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures; that kind of continuity of progress and developement, which might be expected, if both proceed from the same Divine Ruler.

These three, or their reverse, would amount to a sound argument of probability for or against; but not to more. The positive evidence for or against the truths asserted by Scripture, must by the nature of the case be drawn from those historical facts and those moral and spiritual experiences of men with which the Scriptures deal. And as the absence of such coincidences and analogies between physical science and religious truth could no more disprove the latter in the face of adequate moral evidence for them, than it could disprove the former; so neither can their presence demonstrate its reality*. But if the moral, historical and spiritual evidences are forthcoming, these three coincidences,—this fitting in of the one set of facts with the other,—and these analogies, become very valuable as cumulative evidence.

Let us take the first question, and see i. on what main points the Bible and Physical Science deal with the same subject-matter; ii. whether on these points they coincide, or differ,

i. a. The Bible affirms that it is the One Living and

* This will be obvious if you consider how limited the evidence of the physical sciences must be in deciding the truthfulness of an historical record, or the justice of a moral code of laws.

true God Whose purpose and power is the First and efficient Cause of the visible universe, and of all that therein is. This proposition is beyond the ken of Physical Science: but the affirmation contained in it of 'Unity of Cause' can be tested partially by these sciences.

b. It affirms that all the forces of the visible universe are God's forces, directed and limited by His ordinance, and sustained by His power. Again this proposition transcends the sphere of physical science: but the necessary inference, that chance is eliminated, that a unity of operation must be expected, that continuity of purpose, and the dominance of an intelligent order or law in all sensible phenomena are to be looked for; can and indeed must be tested by the results of these physical sciences.

c. The Scriptures affirm that one of the purposes for which God governs this physical world, is to make it a cradle and school for men, rousing their minds to action and inquiry; and leading them up from the study of God's works, to a growing conception and knowledge of God Himself. The purposes of God are no part of the subject-matter of physics: but whether the study of these natural phenomena are, as a matter of fact, educational to men, the students of physical science can best decide.

d. We learn from Scripture that progress from the lower sensuous life to the higher spiritual life is one of God's purposes concerning men: and that in furtherance of this progress the physical forces and vital powers of the visible world have been, and are still continually controlled, bent aside from their ordinary course, and made to subserve that higher moral growth; the higher life unfolding as the lower life decays and passes away. The physical sciences may be able to tell us whether any

analogous developement, or evolution from the lower to the higher forms of life, is to be noted in their domain.

e. The Scriptures affirm that as the visible world began to be at God's command ; so also, when His purpose is fulfilled, the earth itself will pass away, and a new heaven and a new earth, under new and higher conditions, will appear.

Now what are our Modern Physical Sciences telling us on these points ?

a. They affirm a unity of operation and of energy : pointing, irresistibly to our minds, to that Unity of Cause which the Scripture affirms. But they are utterly unable to point out any efficient cause whatever : all they can do in this direction is to tell us that " no physical force known " to us is capable of originating either matter or energy."

b. They affirm that all the known phenomena in our visible universe are orderly, uniform, directed and limited by law ; that as these limitations cannot be conceived of as self-imposed, whence they come these sciences cannot say.

c. On this point the devotees of physical science are never weary of dwelling with delight : the intellectual profit and even the moral efficacy of the study of physical phenomena is the commonplace of our day. Indeed we find men arguing for the continuity of physical phenomena, because, but for continuity, our minds would be hopelessly baffled in investigating nature. Yet in a universe whence science has banished chance, it could be no chance adaptation or harmony that thus made the material processes of nature to be subordinated to the immaterial needs of our minds.

d. Modern physical science is specially distinguished from that of former times by affirming progress from the lower to the higher to be the law of physical developement.

ment: and that progress prepared for from the first. So that in the earliest and lowest period of world-growth it can trace distinct preparation for the higher stages of secular developement. You will remember that the theory of the ancients was of degeneration. The accepted theory, even when I was young, was of stability; now it is of progress; and that in a method so closely analogous to the course of men's spiritual growth as revealed in the Scriptures, as to suggest the question whether the idea was not first borrowed from them.

e. Lastly; Modern Science affirms that this visible universe must have had a beginning in time, and certainly will have an end, as to its present form. In the last century scientific believers knew no law of physics which involved the destruction of this earth. The solar system seemed to them constructed to last for ever; and the destruction of the world was to them possible by the miraculous interposition of God's judgement. Then Hume could challenge them to show it ever had any beginning, any creation at all; now scientific men, believers and unbelievers alike, are telling us our earth must come to an end; and thence they are proving to us, it must also have had a commencement in time. On all these points science is giving us answers in marked though general conformity with the statements concerning them in the Bible. And the new discoveries of science bring out continually some fresh point of agreement, or sweep away some old objection.

2nd. We turn now to the second question: Is physical science sufficient for itself; or does it need some such super-physical facts as those given us in the Scripture to be postulated, before its history of the Cosmos can be made into a consistent and continuous whole?

We answer it is distinctly showing itself insufficient to

itself. Taken by itself, and leaving out all revealed or religious facts, it starts from and leads to inexplicable darkness: even on its way from the one to the other, it offers us distinct gaps or breaks in its history, of which it can give us no explanation whatever. So far from enabling us to dispense with Revelation it is getting to a point where, without that light, it plunges our minds into utter confusion. By the confession of its most ardent believers, it leads us up to a wall of impenetrable darkness, pointing to no rational origin, showing no admissible end.

You will say these statements are assertions, not proofs. Let us then turn to the proofs.

i. In all the remarkable diversity of the physical sciences, perhaps the one fact that is coming out most strongly is "that it is leading its students to an overpowering consciousness of a vast unity of plan or method, and "of the continuity of general laws*." Strangely enough this fact has been made one of the objections to the Scriptural interpretation of the Cosmos. But it is the very fact which the Scripture declares, as the inevitable result of God's creative power. "The Lord Who doeth all "these things, has known them from eternity†." "His eyes "saw all our substance yet being imperfect; and in His "book all was written, which in continuance was fashioned, "when as yet there was none of them‡." "With Him "there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning§." Think what a perplexity it would be to us, who come to these sciences fresh from such revelations,—who believe in "God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth"; if we found in the works of creation no unity of plan, no

* Maurice, *Claims of Bible and Science*.

† Acts xv. 18. See Alford's *Commentary*.

‡ Ps. cxxxix. 16.

§ St James i. 17.

order, no consistent uniformity of operations; if physical science could only present us with a chance medley of phenomena and haphazard sequences. To argue that the reverse of this, and the discovery of unity of method, of far-reaching continuity of law, displaces God, is literally irrational. Take one of our iron-clads, fully armed and manned. Send an intelligent observer to study its construction, to observe the working of its machinery, and the whole routine of life and discipline maintained in it: and what would you say if when he had mastered all its details, he came back and reported thus: "I used to think our ships were the results of human design, and were manned by men: but now I am so overpowered by the unity of plan and method evinced in their construction, and by the uniformity and order of life and discipline carried on there, I am forced to conclude our iron-clads are the result of blind force and inexorable law, and are manned by automata." And in like manner "if we consider the simple uniformities which, compounded together in concrete phenomena, give rise to all the beauty and order of the natural world, it is simply impossible to resist the conclusion they have been put together on purpose, and that nature marches on in a uniform order, because it was meant to do so*." We are then justified in saying that the physical sciences here lead us up to a conclusion for which they are, apart from Revelation, utterly inadequate to account.

ii. Physical Science shows us the prevalence of law; but it can give us no account of the origin or the reason of this reign of law. What do we mean by 'law'? The word is borrowed from the moral sciences: as used by these 'laws' are principles or rules to which we are

* "Supernatural Religion." *Ch. Quarterly*, April, 1876.

required to make our voluntary actions conform, they are limitations imposed, whether by conscience or by the state, on our freedom of action. Borrowing the word, Physical Science uses it to express those actual and uniform limitations of physical forces which it discovers. Laws are not forces, laws do not act, they are administered. The law of gravitation is not the force of attraction but the limitation of that force: instead of acting in every direction and in any ratio, it is found to act only in fixed and limited modes: and taking this as a mark of a controlled force we call the limitation 'its law.'

"Here's law : where's God?"

the geologist is made to ask by Mrs Browning; that the dynamical forces which act on matter act in fixed modes strictly limited, and producing definite and calculable results, can only be accounted for by postulating a directing and controlling Power of which Physical Science can tell us nothing. Yet the strange notion that the 'reign of law' would exclude the reign of God, has been so much indulged in, it may be worth while to consider the matter in another form. You go into an iron foundry: the man who is feeding the furnace tells you he puts in equal parts of fuel, limestone and ironstone, and that this mixture, burnt together, results in cast-iron. This then is the law of iron-making, and it is throughout a limitation: out of all the substances in the world, your choice is limited to three. Out of all the possible proportions in which these three might be used, your choice is limited to one. Does this law exclude the man? on the contrary; it proves the man. It makes it morally certain, by the doctrine of chances, that cast-iron will not be found in this world, without the man.

Physical Science more and more forbids the notion,

that these limitations can be imposed on energy, either by its own properties, or by any occult properties, innate or essential to matter. The one property of energy is that of expansion, or motion in every or any direction. The two properties of matter are inertia and mass. "The progress of science," we are taught, "tends to cashier all qualities; and to indicate that all material phenomena, so far as their objective cause is concerned, are due to simple modes of motion." "No man," Sir Isaac Newton wrote, "no man who has in philosophical matters a competent faculty of thinking, can ever fall into the absurdity that 'gravity is innate, inherent, or essential to matter.'" And, writing in the growing light of the present day, Prof. Clerk Maxwell says: "Matter in all its forms, separate from the 'living subject, is found to be simply the passive recipient of motion. It has inertia" and mass, "and nothing else." Let us realize clearly what that means. Matter has mass, or extension: that is it fills a definite space, so that any given portion of matter will exclude every other portion from the space it is itself occupying. It has inertia: it neither moves itself, nor can it resist any force which sets it in motion, neither can it stop moving of itself. And we must note, that this conclusion is the result of mathematical demonstration, and must therefore override any hypothesis of a merely phenomenal science which assumes that 'matter' does this or that, or has such or such 'potentialities.' The process by which this demonstration was obtained is shortly given us thus.

"Take the theory that matter is inert: then the law of "forces ascertained independently and inductively by actual "experiment, can be and has been applied to that theory "by mathematical calculation," working out what must be the results of that law, if matter is inert. "And these

"results are verified by actual observation" (deductively) "in whatever extent and direction dynamical science can apply them. So that they have attained a degree of certainty exceeding any the human mind can attain by any other process."

It follows from this that as energy with its one property—motion in any and every direction—cannot be the cause of its own limitations or laws; so neither can matter with its one capacity—of being the passive recipient of motion,—be the cause of those limitations which we find to be actually imposed on motion. Apart from Revelation physical science can offer no explanation of the presence of its own laws, but leads us up here also to an impenetrable wall of darkness.

iii. On its way it offers us distinct gaps or breaks in the continuity of its history, of which it can, of itself, give us no explanation whatever.

Physical science shows us the presence of matter, with the one property of mass, and the one capacity of inertia, or of being the passive recipient of force. It shows us the presence of energy having the one property of motion,—the one power in relation to matter, of setting in motion. And these sciences are trying to show how the conjunction of motion and matter have resulted in the harmonious whole of the visible universe, in conformity with the law of continuity.

Now what is this law? It is the limitation, that whatever be the state of things existing in the universe at any given time, it grew out of, and is to be accounted for by the state of things that preceded it. A breach of continuity occurs when some event takes place, which cannot be accounted for by the previous state of things, but must be regarded as a new thing wrought in the universe, i.e.

a miracle. We affirm this continuity from our conviction that every change that takes place in the universe, has a cause for taking place; this is, as we have seen*, an axiom of science, and without assuming it we can have no science at all, and the contrary is incredible.

Now to us who have learnt from the Bible, to include in 'the existing state of things' in the universe, the presence and omnipotence of God, this condition is both logically and practically fulfilled. Accepting the visible and the invisible universes as one great whole; accepting the Divine Creator as made known to us in our Revelation, as the Fashioner, Controller, and Sustainer of the visible world and all its processes; then we find the law of continuity prevail throughout it. If, with the materialist, we insist on denying all but the visible universe, then we find continually 'breaks of continuity'—that is to say, absolutely causeless miracles proved by our science and our reason to have occurred in the history of its developement. We find several times over, a new state of things begun, at some definite time, which cannot be at all accounted for by that state of things in the visible universe which preceded it. As the examination of these events will take us some time, I will give you the Christian interpretation of the law of continuity first.

It is quite conceivable that a world such as ours should exist, and be carried on by an incessant series of individual acts of the Creator's will, without custom or law, each individual event being decided as it were on its own merits. Indeed we find Mr Mill inclined to demand that this method of world-government must be that adopted by an Omnipotent God, to Whom, he says, the use of means would be quite needless.

* Part I., Lecture III. p. 70.

But for finite minds like ours such a world would have been utterly unintelligent, and it would have been incapable of affording us any moral training. In it exertion of any kind would be motiveless. There would be no need for it, if every want were supplied as it arose by the direct interposition of God: there would be no encouragement to it, for we should never be able to count on any fixed result of our exertions. If for example there were no fixed laws in the movements of the solar system, men's lives could never be arranged in any order: we could not calculate on the length of days and nights, we could not tell what season was coming next, nor whether seed-time would be followed by harvest. We must still have been finite creatures, and, however perfect of our kind, progress to a higher kind would have been for ever closed to us, for there would have been nothing to learn and nothing to do. It is then this principle of continuity which makes the visible universe what our Scriptures declare God intends it to be,—a school for finite men, securing their mental progress and laying the foundation of their moral growth*. The authors of the *Unseen Universe*—men who rank amongst the foremost of our living scientific authorities—tell us: “No account of the law of “continuity is complete without reference to the Divine “Creator. Assuming the Personality of God, we must infer the principle of Continuity as the necessary consequence of His relation to the created minds that study “the events of His Universe.” This is its subjective necessity. “Its objective necessity, from the Being of the “Creator, is more apparent. It is the expression of His “Eternity and Infinity. The works of God are not spasmodic or fitful: there is an eternal order in His Universe

* Psalm xix.; Acts xvii. 26—28; Romans i. 19, 20, &c.

“considered as one whole, visible and invisible, material and immaterial: all apparent exceptions are really parts of and necessary to that Divine Order. This is the inevitable conclusion from the existence of such a God as His Revelation enables our minds to realize, Who was, and is, and is to come; with Whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning*.”

As to the existence of these apparent ‘exceptions’ or acknowledged breaks of continuity, there is no dispute. The students of science indeed claim, and may justly claim, time to solve them: but at the present the chief ones are these†.

i. The beginning of the visible universe, in the conjunction of motion with matter.

ii. The commencement of organic life in a previously lifeless world.

iii. The addition to organic life of conscious sentience, i.e. of mind in its first and simplest form. Many add here,—as it seems to me justly,—the addition to conscious sentience of the moral sense and higher reason, as distinguished from the understanding; but as it is disputed whether this is a break or a result of continuous development, we will omit it here.

iv. The end of the visible universe in its present mode of existence, at any rate the end of this earth; and hence the end of that continuous progress which we are told has been and is still taking place upon it.

* *Church Quarterly Review*, April 1876, Art. *Unseen Universe*.

† The argument from Continuity is wholly distinct from and independent of the argument from the breaks of continuity. It is probable these ‘breaks’ may finally prove referable to that higher law of spiritual continuity, which we shall discover when the unceasing and unbroken imparting and sustaining power of God is seen in the most ordinary process of nature, as evidently as it is now recognized in miraculous events.

The first and fourth may be considered together: indeed the proof of the first depends in part on the certainty of the last; both are to be proved by mathematical calculation and demonstration, and although this work has not yet been completed, and some of the results are still disputed, there is a considerable amount of inductive and deductive evidence for them: and they are the conclusions drawn by some of our most eminent authorities in physical science.

Those who hold the doctrine of the conservation and dissipation of energy, must perforce admit that the whole visible universe will in time die out, becoming cold and motionless, unless renewed impulse be imparted from the invisible universe. And the time at which this end of the present order will arrive, is on the data which follow a matter of mathematical calculation.

a. The amount of energy, or *vis viva*, in the visible universe is always the same.

b. In all its forms it is transmutable, i.e. able to pass from one to another form; and it only does work, it only moves matter, whilst it is being transmuted.

c. One of the forms into which it is constantly being transformed is heat, and heat is constantly degenerating from active into latent heat, less readily transmutable, and therefore less capable of doing work.

d. It follows that in process of time all existing energies will have been transformed into latent heat, equally diffused through ether-filled space. Then motion will cease, because transmutation will cease, and darkness and silence will fill the universe.

The reason of this is plain; take for example the heat of the sun. It is radiating heat into space in equal volume all round it: that portion which reaches the earth

is transmuted into various forms of motion and does work: but that which radiates into merely ether-filled space gets equably transfused; and when this process has gone on so long that the sun and space are of the same temperature, there will be a complete equilibrium of heat, and all its correlative motion must cease.

And here it is interesting to notice that "Prof. Clerk Maxwell, the highest authority we have on molecular science, has shown that the continued interposition of intelligent beings might, without any introduction of additional energy, prevent this degradation of existing physical energies....The conclusion that the direction of physical energies may be changed without expenditure of physical energy, follows from several considerations: in this case it follows that an Infinite Intelligent Will may restore the transformability of energies, without any break of continuity."

However this dissipation of heat being denied by some, we will confine ourselves now to our own world; concerning which two possible ends are foreseen by science.

i. It appears certain from astronomical calculation that the earth is, very slowly, approaching the sun: it is clear therefore that unless some new force intervenes to prevent it, it must be expected to approach it at a continually accelerating rate, and at last to fall into it and serve for a brief space as fuel to the slowly dying-out sun.

ii. The teaching of modern astronomy, confirmed to some extent by the evidence of geology, shows us that our earth was not at first formed in its present state. That it was at one time vaporous or gaseous with the intensity of heat "generated by its materials falling together from practically infinite distances as a cloud of dust," as we shall see presently. Then cooling down and shrinking in

its dimensions, it was at a subsequent period a liquid or molten mass; and for a long period in the same state that our sun—retaining its heat longer through its greater mass—is now. That, parting with its heat most rapidly from its surface, it became solid, then opaque, and lastly habitable. Thus it arrived at its present condition by radiating away its heat; and so it must go on cooling until it is cold, and consequently lifeless, airless, and waterless, as the smaller mass of our moon is already.

Hence it appears that the energy which threw our solar system into this furious state of heat, must have begun to act on matter at some definite time. Had it begun to act sufficiently long ago, it would already have so far done its work as to have left the earth and sun and all the planets cold and lightless, and brought them back to silence and death. The question how long ago it began to act is of no consequence to our argument and is clearly not yet decided by mathematicians: it depends on the amount of heat first generated in the earth, and on the rate of its radiation. Mr Proctor throws into each of these stages we have named, thousands of millions of years by the handful as it were. The calculation was recently made by three mathematicians, independently of each other; who concurred in fixing the earth's genesis as a solid sphere at between fifteen to twenty millions of years ago. Sir W. Thomson offers the geologist, for the exigencies of *his* science, a space of time varying between thirty millions as the most probable, and ninety millions as the utmost length possible*. But be this as it may, it is clear there was a time when this energy first began to work and began to form the earth and the heavenly bodies, which before

* Address on Mathematics and Physics, at Glasgow (Meeting of the British Association, 1876), by Sir W. Thomson.

were not. And the advent of this energy is to the materialist a distinct break of continuity.

Again, energy is motion, or that which moves, and nothing more. But motion is inconceivable in a vacuum, because there is nothing there to move: and, as we have said, we cannot think of "the movement of nothing." Hence science must begin by postulating matter. Was matter eternal, or was it self-created? It could not be the latter, for it has no property but inertia: nor the former, for it is not infinite. Prof. Hæckel indeed assumes that the material universe is "both eternal and infinite"; and that "matter, and the motion inseparable from matter, remain eternal and indestructible." But granting that there cannot be motion without matter to be moved, we certainly have at present no adequate ground for asserting that there cannot be matter without motion. And as for its being infinite Canon Birks replies:

"If matter be infinite in extension, the universe must be full of matter: if the universe be full of matter there can be no attractive force; every spot being equally full no particles can draw closer to each other. And there can be no rotatory motion, for there would be no reason for turning one way more than another. And no primitive heat, for heat is motion, and no change of place is possible in a plenum where no particle has any place to move into, that is not already filled."

And so Mr Spencer tells us "Hæckel is unphilosophical:" that "it is the indestructibility of force and the eternity of motion which are *à priori* truths, transcending both demonstration and experience." It does seem a little hard to be ordered to believe an assertion on the ground that it can never be proved, or its truth experienced. However motion being known to us only as a phenomenon

of matter, Science knows nothing whatever of its eternity : she tells us the atomic units of which all the matter we know is most probably composed, are certainly not eternal. Whether the rarer and more tenuous ether, out of which atoms may have been formed, was eternal or not Science does not know, and not knowing will not judge. "Physical Science knows nothing of *a priori* truths : and force has "no objective reality, but is a useful idea*." Mr Spencer probably confused it with 'Energy' in the above assertion†. But that matter has always been moving, i.e. the eternity of energy, is inconsistent with the nebulous theory which is now taking its place as an established, though not yet fully corrected theory of phenomenal science. That is, it is based on a considerable number of independent facts drawn from observation, and a great number of inductions, obtained for the most part from dynamical and astronomical science, both perhaps among the most advanced and reliable of our sciences ; and so far it is said to be standing the test of mathematical calculation. It cannot therefore be set aside by the mere assertion of an hypothesis, such as Mr Spencer's is.

* Prof. Tait, *Recent Advances in Physical Science*.

† "The Material Universe consists i. of matter, ii. of energy.

"There are two forms of energy, which change one into the other, (a) "kinetic, (b) potential energy.

"Energy is never found separate from matter. So that we might define "Matter' as the recipient or vehicle of energy : as that which is essential to "the existence of the known forms of energy, and without which there "could be no transformation of energy.

"Kinetic energy is that of visible or actual motion.

"Potential energy is the tranquil form of power (due to position), it is "the capacity to move.

"Ether, a very rare fluid, is displaced by matter ; and is the material "basis of light undulations"—"the physical substratum of all matter." "It "is in substance the same as the densest matter,—and Matter is the result "of the ether being moved in a certain manner." *Unseen Universe*.

Now the nebulous theory does not pretend to deal with eternity; but only with that state of things in the visible universe which may have preceded the formation of those heavenly bodies and our earth, which constitute its present form. It begins by postulating space filled with a perfect, or nearly perfect fluid, which it calls ether, in a state of rest: "invariable in density, absolutely inert, it lay motionless in utter darkness." But even in this silence and darkness there was anticipation, for we are told "it lay motionless, *but with a perfect capacity for motion.*" And anticipation is the mark of mind.

This is 'the beginning' of modernest science. 'The beginning' in our Bible is "The earth was without form and void,—and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters."

Science goes on: "Then there came a time when this ether sea was flooded with energy, and vibrated throughout its mass with light and heat"—the resultant forms of the motion imparted. Whence this new thing, motion, came, science can no more tell us than she can tell whence the ether came, or how it became endowed with its perfect capacity for being moved. This advent of energy is a breach of continuity in Physical Science: the Bible supplies us with the missing link: "And God said, Let there be light; and light was."

Here then we have the desired conjunction of ether and energy, and that in a manner which not only points to, but which absolutely demands, a previous state of things utterly irreconcilable with present laws. This is declared by Prof. Tait. "Sir W. Thomson has shown," he says, "that Fourier's magnificent treatment of the conduction of heat, leads to formulas for its distribution, which are intelligible (and of course capable of being fully verified

“by experiment) for all time future: but which (except in “particular cases) when extended to time past, remain intelligible for a finite time only; and *then* indicate a state of things which could not have resulted under known laws from any conceivable previous distribution....The example is now adduced as a simple illustration of the fact, that all portions of our science, and specially that beautiful one, the dissipation of energy, point unanimously to a beginning; i. e. to a state of things incapable of being derived by present laws from any conceivable previous arrangement*.”

Thus the coming of energy with its existing laws and limitations is the first distinct break in continuity.

Motion being imparted to the ether-fluid, the next fact that meets us is that “matter is the result of ether being moved in a certain way”; and in matter “we come ultimately to the atom, for the developement of which no finite power is sufficient, and the existence of which indicates an intelligent agent†.”

Of these atoms we are told: “They are of definite form and incompressible; they continue this day as they were when first formed, perfect in number, measure and weight, incapable alike of growth and of decay. None of the processes of nature have produced the slightest difference in any one of them.” It is in consequence of this uniformity that Sir J. Herschel and Prof. Clerk Maxwell have said “*these atoms bear all the marks of manufactured articles.*”

The second modern hypothesis or conception of the constitution of the material universe is that of the vortex-ring atoms. It also presupposes,

* *Recent Advances in Physical Science*, by Prof. Tait.

† Ditto.

i. An ethereal medium, i. e. an incompressible perfect fluid, filling all space.

ii. The atoms or vortex-rings evolved in this ethereal fluid, in which light and heat are propagated by vibrations. Taking up this hypothesis Sir W. Thomson says: "If the atoms were thus formed, it is proved by mathematical analysis, that the atom must continue for ever; nothing short of Infinite Power being able to originate or destroy its motion." Prof. Tait also writes: "Sir W. Thomson's splendid suggestion of vortex-atoms, if correct, will enable us to understand matter and to investigate mathematically all its properties. Its very basis implies the *absolute necessity* of an intervention of creative power, to form or to destroy one atom, even of dead matter*."

Thus the beginning of the present visible universe, the production of matter, was as far as we can judge an abrupt act.

What was it developed from? Ether. What was ether developed from? "The visible universe only occupies an infinitesimal portion of space, and is infinitely heterogeneous, differentiated, multiform. The ether on the contrary, if it has any physical existence at all, is a continuous homogeneous substance filling all space. Therefore this makes an abrupt change†." It may be said this is hypothesis, not proof. The vortex-ring hypothesis is not yet established. But whether the atoms were formed in that or some other way, of the atomic theory itself we are told: "This theory of the constitution of matter has received such aid from mathematical analysis in the researches of Clerk Maxwell and others, that it must now be regarded as a branch of true science‡." And this

* *Recent Advances in Physical Science*, by Prof. Tait.

† *Church Quarterly Review*, Art. *Unseen Universe*.

‡ Ditto.

theory witnesses inevitably against materialism, and for the presence of a creative will. "It postulates a creative "will to determine the number and place of the atoms, "and those laws of their attraction and repulsion which "must guide all their later movements*."

But on the atheistical, and on Hæckel's or Mr Spencer's side, we have not even a possible theory; we have only a mere hypothesis which (as Canon Birks has shown) will neither hold together with the facts, nor even with itself. Scientifically we are bound to accept the most consistent and the most probable theory, without prejudice from the way in which it bears on religious truth. The believer certainly has no need to make haste in forcing the guesses of science into a premature accordance with the statements of the Scripture; knowing well that wherever a true science may lead him, "she cannot lead him beyond God, "into a place where God is not†."

And now chemistry comes in to tell us how these atoms were dealt with. Whether they are all of one kind, "that "is, all allotropic forms of one primary substance," or whether they have been told off into a definite and limited number of kinds, seems not to be known. In the latter case the atoms of each kind are exactly alike, and their distinguishing qualities are invariable. And we are told that the properties of our most compound chemical substances result from differences of structure and arrangement, owing to the compounding and recombining of at the most a very limited variety of ultimate units or atoms. And these simplest substances are placed under the strictest limitations. "They are not allowed to be neutral to "the other kinds, neither may they unite with them at

* *Uncertainties of Modern Science.*

† *Hare's Victory of Faith.*

“random. Each is provided with its select list of admissible companions, and the terms of its partnership are strictly provided, so that not one can modify by the most trivial fraction the capital it has to bring*.” Is it conceivable that the boundless variety of substances and forms that clothe our earth with beauty and organic life, and make its surface a storehouse for all the needs of life, could thus be produced without design by the chance combinations and juxtapositions of these atoms acting under purely dynamic laws, and self-imposed chemical relations? You see how this latest science strengthens Sir Isaac Newton’s argument, and intensifies its force†.

We must turn to dynamics and to astronomy to learn how from these vortex-atoms the process of world-construction went on: how “driven through space by fixed dynamical laws,—each atom in its path solving differential equations which if written out might belt the world‡—” they congregated together in masses which, growing denser with clouds of swift-coming atoms, became luminous nebulous clouds, such as are still beheld condensing into sun-stars, and are recognized as being now in what was formerly the earliest stage of our own earth, of the sun, and all its planets. As these nebulous clouds formed, the ether fluid itself must have become rarer. Had any human eye witnessed what was passing, the formless ether deep would apparently have been seen separating into distinct masses with expansions of clearer space between them. And if the beholder had few words—one word, as water, serving for all fluids—and if he knew of no other clear expanse of space besides the azure firmament; he might have

* Rev. J. Martineau.

† See Part I., Lecture III. p. 83.

‡ Sir J. Herschel.

described what he saw thus: "God said, Let there be a "firmament* in the midst of the waters; and let it divide "the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters under the firmament from "the waters above the firmament. And God called the "firmament heaven. And the evening was, and the morning was."

One thing respecting these nebulae we must stop to notice. The spectroscope has discovered in them the presence of iron, platina, sulphur, and silica. These substances we must then suppose were already stored up and present in that nebulous cloud which was destined to become our abode. Now, as Prof. Pritchard says, "The great "modern advance of human knowledge, and specially the "application of that knowledge to the purposes of the arts "of life, have arisen very much from the presence of these "substances, and of coal, upon our planet.—What were the "anterior chances that when man came, after the lapse of "ages, upon our earth, he would have found stored up for "him and for his developement, iron and coal, and sulphur, "and platina, and silica? To tell me that the coexistence "of all these essentially independent existences, *might* be "the result of anything short of the intention of a pre-scient will,—the evidences of a pre-established harmony, "—would be equivalent to telling me, that after placing "sufficient letters of the alphabet into a box, there *might* be "dredged out of it the dialogues of Plato, the dramas of "Shakespeare, and the Principia of Newton†."

So striking are these and similar instances of anticipation and pre-established adaptations, that some materialists have been ready to endow the atoms themselves with 'an

* Marg. reading 'expansion.'

† *Modern Science and Natural Religion.*

'anticipatory power'. And doubtless if we endow our atoms with forethought and intelligent purpose to begin with, there will be no breach of continuity in getting these foot-prints of intelligent Will in the results of their action. Still experience tells us that forethought and preparation are, so far as she knows, marks of mind and not of matter.

The next break of continuity—the beginning of life on the hitherto lifeless globe—we must consider when we meet again. Only one thing I would add now. We are under no obligation to prove that the first chapter of Genesis is a literal account of the physical phenomena which occurred in the genesis of the visible universe, or of our own earth. It is we believe the inspired poem or Psalm of the Creation; and as such has scarcely its equal for sublimity out of the Bible. It may be that the poet-seer who wrote it, beheld what he records passing before him in a vision, to the several acts of which he gave his own interpretation, in his best words. If so, he witnessed the creative work of God marked off into distinct epochs, each commencing with the creative word spoken, and followed by that 'New thing' appearing in the visible universe or on the earth, which physical science is now beginning to recognize as an actual breach of continuity. He saw this new power or principle in the morning of its activity taking possession of the world, culminating into its fullest developement, and then in its evening leaving the earth ready to receive the next and higher creative gift that in God's purpose was to follow, and following stamped the next epoch with its special characteristic.

It was always a difficulty in this account of the Creation, that it represented light as being created before the sun and the stars, which are to us our only sources of light. I remember very well hearing the matter discussed by

thoughtful clergymen,—who had, as educated men, the good sense to wait and not to dogmatize,—and different hypotheses suggested to explain it. Now Science tells us, it is not the sun that brought light and heat, but the energy of which light and heat are modes, that formed the sun. In short, that had the writer of the first chapter of Genesis placed the sun first, as any man writing the history out of his own experience and judgement almost certainly would have done, he would have been contradicted by that Modern Science, which now, in this particular at least, confirms his account.

LECTURE VI.

REVELATIONS OF THE PHENOMENAL SCIENCES COMPARED WITH THE PARALLEL ACCOUNTS IN THE SCRIPTURES.

"The Jehovah possessed me in the beginning, before His works of old: while as yet He had not made the sea, nor the open places, nor the chief part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the Heavens I was there: when He established the clouds above: when He gave to the sea His decree that the waters should not pass His commandment: then I was by Him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."

WE are engaged now in tracing out several distinct lines of evidence. The proofs of each come so fast to-day, we cannot stop to point out each as it comes without confusing the argument, and it may therefore be as well, even at the risk of being tedious, to recapitulate the chief of them, before proceeding to our immediate subject.

1. The Physical Sciences are showing us a progressive and orderly developement of the visible universe, in a series of successive epochs, or distinct stages: this order in the results showing order in the cause.

2. They show us, in each epoch, preparation being made for those higher stages of developement which have in fact followed. And this manifestation of intelligent design and far-seeing purpose can only be explained, in con-

formity with all our experience, by the presence and action of intelligent Will in the cause.

3. This account of world-developement agrees i. generally with what the Scriptures tell us of physical matters : and ii. is strictly analogous to that progress from the lower sensuous life of the natural man, to that higher spiritual life*, which is the great human subject of our Divine Revelation.

4. The physical sciences show us certain breaks of continuity in the course of this developement ; i.e. they show us at several points a new state of things begun, which cannot be accounted for by the (physical) state of things which preceded it. Such events bear on our inquiry in two ways.

i. They show that physical science, rejecting the aid of revelation and of faith in God, cannot give us a reasonable and consistent history of its own phenomena, but brings us up, at these breaks, not only to an absolute, but also to a causeless miracle.

ii. They serve as luminous points, where the Hand of the Divine Creator, as made known to us in the Bible, becomes visible in nature. Accepting the fact of His presence and power, the law of continuity is nowhere broken, and the history of world-developement becomes a consistent and marvellously beautiful whole: rejecting it—that history becomes a series of broken and disjointed changes.

Such an event we found in the coming of energy, and the evolution of atoms in the consequently vibrating ether sea.

The events we have to consider to-day belong at present rather to phenomenal than to physical science strictly

* The stages being indicated by the terms *sarkikos*, *psykikos*, *pneumatikos*, as Romans vii. 14 ; 1 Cor. xv. 44, 45.

so called. They are* ii. The commencement of organic life in a previously lifeless world.

iii. The addition to organic life of conscious sentiency, or mind in its first and simplest form : and the addition to intelligence of the moral sense and higher reason.

iv. The end of the visible world in its present mode of existence, and hence the end of the continuity of progress.

We left the earth cooling down from a more than white heat, from a gaseous to a molten stage, and thence into a slowly dying red heat and a solidifying condition. And the problem before us now is, how to explain the advent of vegetable life on the results of such a condition as this.

The work of preparation for vegetable life offers no breach of continuity: but it is far too marvellous to be passed over without a brief summary. To trace it, let us picture to ourselves, with Mr Proctor's help, the state of our globe during this its sun-stage of cooling.

As the surface of the globe must necessarily have parted with its heat much faster than did its internal mass, it would become solid much sooner: would in fact become a red-hot crust over a still molten and partly gaseous central mass. As it cooled it would contract much faster than the centre; and this contraction would not only make it liable to crack; but under such a contracting pressure the still molten contents would be continually bursting through the hardening crust with tremendous violence, and with an explosive volcanic force of which the expiring volcanoes of our time can give us no more idea than the cracking of a chestnut in the fire could give of the eruption which destroyed Pompeii. Then

* See Lecture v. p. 129 ante.

Mr Proctor shows that such a globe must cool fastest at its poles. Indeed he thinks that Saturn (which is still so much in the sun-stage of its developement as to shine in part by its own light) may be now ready, or "getting ready," for vegetation at its poles, whilst its equatorial regions are glowing with light and heat, and its crust there is still convulsed.

"Getting ready for vegetation." It is quite clear that organic life such as we know it could not exist in any conceivable form in such a world as this red-hot one. Yet all the substances needed for the support of living organisms were being stored up there, and that on the surface. "With my own hands," Prof. Pritchard says, "I obtained all the elements which I found in a grain of wheat and in an egg, out of a piece of granite and the air that surrounded it." But think how much had to be prepared besides food,—a friable soil, and air, and water. The primitive igneous rocks resulting from this heat "probably resembled in composition certain furnace slags or volcanic glasses*." These might contain the actual substances needed for the food of plants, but must be wholly decomposed and changed before the smallest lichen could grow upon them. The agents in this work of decomposition were air and water; but both these had to be prepared also. And how was this done?

Going back to the molten stage, Mr Proctor tells us our seas and oceans were all there, the same in substance or nearly so as now, but in an altogether different condition. The intense heat would necessarily keep the oceans "boiled off" into the atmosphere; spreading them through the air, partly as pure aqueous vapour, partly, as this rose

* Dr S. Hunt, the great Canadian chemist, quoted by Proctor in "When the Sea was young," *Cornhill*, Vol. xxxiv., 1876, p. 440.

further above the earth into the cooler regions, they would condense into clouds: "an outside layer of cirrus clouds, "below that a layer of the cumulus or woolpack clouds; "and below that again a deep layer of the densest nimbus "or rain clouds, from which perfect sheets of rain must "have been at all times pouring; not however to reach "the glowing surface of the earth, but, vaporised by the "heat, to rush upwards again in the form of vapour." Then he speaks of the violent disturbances that must have taken place among the cloud layers, from this continual uprushing of the freshly formed aqueous vapour—the continual rarefactions and condensations of the air. We cannot follow him through the beautiful "verification" of this reasoning in the character of the convulsions which astronomers are now recording, as they see them actually taking place in the cloud envelopes of Jupiter and of Saturn*. It is enough to notice the enormous thickness of the cloud envelope which then contained the whole of the present mass of water, and rested as now upon the atmosphere.

And in what state was the air? "We have," he tells us, "reason for believing that the atmosphere then "contained, besides the oxygen and nitrogen now present "in the air, and the then excessive mass of aqueous "vapour, enormous quantities of carbonic, chloric, and "sulphureous gases, besides an excess of oxygen. This "heavily laden atmosphere, expanded by the heat, must "have extended many times further from the earth than "her present aerial envelope....It is not unlikely that the "outermost part of the cloud envelope was then several "hundred miles above the earth's surface." So that an

* A seemingly crucial instance of his theory has occurred since this article was written, in the rent which is being watched in Jupiter's cloud envelope, revealing the darker body of the planet below it.

astronomer on Mars, taking this shining envelope for the earth's real surface, would have found her density to be far less probably than that we have been attributing to Jupiter. On the other hand, under such an envelope, the heavenly bodies would be invisible; and the light must have been chiefly furnished from the still glowing equatorial regions, until the cooling surface of the earth had allowed the clouds to descend in rain and become seas. This would not however it seems take place equally and at once: but the waters would fall on the polar regions and seas and dry land appear there before any rain could fall in the tropics. These primeval showers were the means of freeing the air from its load of noxious gases: Dr S. Hunt says, "When this condensation took place, the earth's cooling crust would be drenched with a heated solution of hydrochloric acid, whose decomposing action aided by its high temperature would be exceedingly rapid." The process of decomposition (of the volcanic slags and glasses) would continue "under the action of these heavy showers until the affinities of the hydrochloric acid were satisfied." Later on "drenching showers of heated solutions of sulphuric acid would fall," to be followed by one or two other chemical agents, washed out of the air by the condensing and falling ocean. Thus it seems that the air was purified and made fit for vegetable life, by the same process which decomposed the rocks into a soil in which it was possible for plants to grow, and which provided it with all the salts which vegetable and animal organisms would subsequently need*.

* It is impossible to read this account and not be reminded how in all references to the Creation in the Old Test., so much stress is laid upon "the clouds," and that their arrangement and action is referred to as an important part of that work. As in Job, "He hangeth the earth upon

The conditions now would be the most favourable to luxuriant vegetable growth that can be conceived, i.e. a considerable and almost uniform temperature, an atmosphere saturated with moisture and carbonic acid gas. For Dr S. Hunt goes on, "After these compounds had been separated from the air, carbonic acid would still continue to be an important constituent of the air." And another writer says, "During the carboniferous or coal-making periods, the luxuriant vegetation received abundant supplies of carbonic acid, from an atmosphere still overcharged with the results of violent volcanic action."

It has been made an objection to the account of the third day or epoch in Genesis, that plants are there described as growing before the sun was made; whereas they cannot grow without sunlight and heat. But so long as the earth continued partially in this sun-stage, the cloud envelope would continue and the equatorial regions would still be pouring out light and heat. As the earth cooled, the ocean condensed, and the sun would become visible to a portion, as it has now become visible on a part of the surface of Jupiter.

Thus the reign of physical forces was changing, their constructive work was accomplished, and giving place to the gentler processes of decay. Preparation was complete and all was ready for the advent of Life. And here we come to that which we maintain to be the second great breach of continuity. Where was life to come from? It is

"nothing. He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them. He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it." "Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare if thou hast understanding.—Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it break forth as from the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof and thick darkness a swaddling band for it?" So again, Prov. viii. 25—29, iii. 19, 20.

demonstrably certain there could be no life in the world at that period. The degree of heat which will destroy every germ of life, and reduce every living seed to its ultimate molecules, is well known. The temperature of the earth in its gaseous, and then in its white-heat stages, far exceeded that degree. There was nothing there but mass with its inertia and physical energies in all their various modes.

And it is equally certain that subsequently to that period, vegetable life did begin to be, to grow, and to multiply. The question before us is, What made it begin? Was Life evolved from physical movement by chemical processes, or was it imparted from above?

Science answers: "Life is not a form of physical energy "or it would create *vis viva*: it cannot be the result of "physical energy, or it would absorb *vis viva*: it does "neither. Although Life determines very largely, and "with undeniable power, the application, and in some sense "or other the direction, of physical energies, it is incapable "of being transformed into, or exchanged with any*."

And this is confirmed by all we know of life and its results. All the modes of physical energy are interchangeable. Life is individual and special, and admits of no transformation into any of those modes. Physical force admits of no increase, its total sum is invariable. Life is ever increasing and multiplying and replenishing the earth. Physical energy we are told acts blindly, without any reference to ends whether of construction, preservation, or destruction. But whatever life does is for the promotion of its own ends. The tendency of physical energy is to degenerate, losing its power of doing work: the tendency of life, modern science and Scripture alike tell us, is from

* *Church Quarterly Review*. See also *Unseen Universe*, Art. 228—236.

the simpler to the more complex, the lower to the higher, the less to the more intense life. The results of inorganic developement are all irregular: the mass of iron or silica formed in the nebula has no regular structure, no fixed proportion, and no relation to other masses. But in all matter seized upon and appropriated by life, all is organized and in order; in its simplest incipient form the proportion of the elements of which it is composed is exact, and their arrangement is symmetrical. How then shall we define this life? we cannot define it: we can only observe its phenomena, and note the results of its presence. Though life is thus obviously no form of physical energy, yet most if not all the processes of organic life are carried on by means of mechanical or chemical forces. In organic bodies whilst under the influence of life, we find the very same mechanical and chemical laws at work, which we have observed in inorganic substances, but we find them bent from their inorganic results, sometimes resisted, at all times deflected, and made to assist in building up more and more complex forms of protoplasm, from the simple unnucleated cells that still crowd the bottom of the sea, to the fully developed brain of man. We know too that when life is extinct, the chemical forces that subserved the growth of its organisms, no longer subdued and governed by its presence, instantaneously set to work to break down and destroy the organisms they had before built up, and to resolve them into their first molecules—no further*. And the same holds true of mechanical force. No doubt it is

* For example: the gastric juice of the stomach is a chemical agent that can dissolve any dead flesh, but cannot touch living substances. In some cases of sudden death it has been found that this gastric juice, unweakened by previous illness, has actually begun to dissolve the coats of the stomach, on which in life it had no more power than if it had been so much water.

obedience to the law of gravitation that enables the living bird to fly or float in the air, the living man to stand upright and walk: but life extinct, the same law brings both, motionless, to the ground. The amount of the physical energy present at the moment of death is precisely the same as it was the moment before death, its laws are the same, but its results are reversed.

Thus Professor Stewart* says, "Life is not a bully who swaggers out into the open universe upsetting the laws of energy in all directions; but rather a consummate strategist, who sitting in his secret chamber over his wires, directs the movements of a great army." Prof. Stokes again tells us: "Admitting to the full as highly probable, though not completely demonstrated, the applicability to living beings of the laws that have been ascertained with reference to dead matter; I feel constrained at the same time to admit the existence of a mysterious something lying beyond, a something *sui generis*, which I regard not as suspending the ordinary physical laws, but as working with and through them to the attainment of a designed end. This something, which we call life—what it may be is a profound mystery†."

John Hunter, the celebrated anatomist and surgeon, who combined in so marked a degree "great strength and power with considerable scientific prudence, evidently came to the same conclusion. The question 'what is life?' greatly occupied him: he spoke of life as a principle, "something apart from organization,—a power anterior in the order of thought to the organization which animates, maintains and repairs."

The next fact we have to notice concerning life is this:

* Stewart on *Energy* (quoted).

† Quoted in *Unseen Universe*.

"It never appears, even in the simplest form, without the intervention of a living antecedent." "If it could, either the philosophy of physical science must be at fault, or nature must herself present the most perplexing breaks of continuity*." Tyndall and Huxley agree with Prof. Lister "that spontaneous generation, or the appearance of life without a living antecedent, is not only logically incredible, but is forbidden by positive evidence. And Tyndall's experiments are the more satisfactory, because his creed is or was, that it is a scientific necessity to believe, whatever experience may teach, in the potency of matter to produce organisms†." "The doctrine of spontaneous generation is of high antiquity, and has been taken up again in connection with Darwinism. There is a strong temptation to adopt the ultimate conclusion of the evolution theory....It is in harmony with that tendency to generalization so natural to man....We feel an undeniable necessity to connect the organic world with the whole.

"But in opposition to this it must be emphatically stated, all really scientific knowledge respecting a beginning of life, has followed a course exactly contrary... We have come in these researches to know a large number of new ways in which the propagation of different creatures is effected. We do not know a single positive fact, to show that a *generatio equivoca* has ever been made. If I do not choose to accept a theory of creation: if I prefer to make a universe for myself, then I must make it in the sense of *generatio equivoca*. No alternative remains, when once we say 'I will *not* have creation, 'but I *will* have an explanation.' But we have no proof

* Prof. Lister.

† *Church Quarterly Review*, Art. *Unseen Universe*, April 1876.

"of it: no one has ever seen it; and whoever supposes it
"to have occurred is contradicted by the naturalist, as much
"as by the theologian. If any proof was successful, it must
"even then be settled to what extent the spontaneous
"generation is admissible. No one would think of main-
"taining it accounts for all organic beings.

"As to that first point,—the connection of the organic
"and inorganic, we must confess that in fact we know no-
"thing about it*."

Professor Huxley has a very singular argument, in his *Physical basis of life*, on this question. Having shown how all protoplasm consists of four lifeless elements, variously combined into three equally lifeless compounds, i. e. carbonic acid, water, and ammonia; he adds "But
"when these three are brought together, *under certain conditions*," they give rise to the still more complex body, protoplasm, which exhibits the phenomena of life. The question then, 'How is life produced?' turns on the answer to the question; 'Under what conditions will carbonic acid, water, and ammonia, become living protoplasm?' And Huxley answers this himself; "when under the influence
"of preexisting living protoplasm." That is to say, you will—or rather you may—find life in the sequence, when you have life in the antecedent, and not unless. But every one is agreed about that: one need not be a chemist or a physiologist to know that life is propagated by living plants and living animals under suitable circumstances and conditions. What we are supposed to be asking now is, Can the phenomena of life result from the nature and disposition of the component matter of protoplasm alone, or from any form of physical energy alone, without the intervention of a living agent? Huxley himself tells us that

* *Freedom of Science in Modern State*, Prof. Rudolph Virchow.

as a matter of fact it never does, within our knowledge. Yet here he argues, or seems to argue, as if it might.

"As water, made of oxygen and hydrogen by passing an electric spark through them, has properties of its own," (i.e. properties not possessed by either of the components, or by the agent), "so when carbonic acid, water, and ammonia disappear, and in their place, under the influence of preexisting living protoplasm, an equivalent weight of the matter of life makes its appearance*, why assume the presence of a something called vitality which has no correlative or representative in the not living matter?" "You do not," he says, "talk of a principle of aqueity to account for the properties of water: why should you talk of a principle of vitality, to account for the properties of living matter?"

Perhaps this reasoning will be plainer if put thus: Oxygen and hydrogen + the action of electricity = water. Carbonic acid, water and ammonia + the influence of (vitality?) living protoplasm = living organic matter.

Thus the vitality he wishes us to omit, is not added by us to the result, but included by himself in the cause: assuming his chemistry to be correct, it follows, that just as oxygen and hydrogen will not unite in water without electricity, so neither will carbonic acid, water, and ammonia be built up into protoplasm without the agency of preexisting life, or vitality. He goes on:

"If the phenomena exhibited by water are its properties, so those presented by protoplasm, living or dead, are its properties. If the properties of water may be properly said to result from the nature and disposition of its molecules; I can find no ground for refusing to say, that the properties of protoplasm result from the nature and

* See Note D.

“disposition of *its* molecules....And all vital action may be said to be the result of the molecular forces of the protoplasm which displays it.”

And this astounding remark he makes, after expressly stating that the matter or stuff of protoplasm is dead matter, and cannot get itself arranged into living organism without the intervention of preexisting life. You see he begs the whole question by slipping in the assumption that “life” is, or results from “molecular forces,” and that with the same verbal ambiguity we noticed before*. What does he mean by “molecular forces”? The “forces” which move the atoms of water are all modes of energy or what used to be known as *vis viva*. But among the “molecular forces” of a living protoplasm he includes life and vital action, which is not energy or *vis viva*.

I think his argument may be put thus; it is one of analogy.

i. The lifeless water owes its properties to the nature and disposition of its component lifeless molecules; therefore

ii. The living protoplasm owes its properties to the nature and disposition of its component [lifeless, living] molecules:—Which does he mean? If “lifeless” it is not true, as he himself has shown us: if “living” his proposition amounts to this, “that living protoplasm owes its qualities “to its being alive + its individual organic structure,” which I imagine no one ever doubted.

One question which Prof. Huxley begs throughout, is that of the nature of force. He appears at least to assume, that “force” is a property of the atoms or molecules (for he does not here distinguish between these) by virtue of their own nature: to assume this is to deny the inertia of

* Lecture III. p. 66.

matter. Hence it is declared by some, and at the Glasgow meeting of the British Association in 1876, Dr Tait claimed to have shown, that Prof. Huxley "has failed to master "the true conception of force itself."

Again, when he speaks of the dead matter of life as the same matter as the living protoplasm possesses: "with no "hint at all that there is any difference in chemical composition or in molecular arrangement between the living "and the dead;" and then alleges "that the properties "of living protoplasm are altogether dependent on the "arrangement of its constituent atoms:" he gives us an "effect without any cause"*: i. e. there is no cause for the action of the living protoplasm as distinguished from the inaction of the dead protoplasm.

The general weight of testimony, including Huxley's own, is clearly at present coincident with the logical conclusion, and, thus as a matter of fact as well as of reason we must acknowledge that life, even in its simplest form, does not appear in the sequence, except where it has been present in the antecedent. On the other hand, it is certain it did appear on this earth at some definite time, and living protoplasm was formed where no preexisting living protoplasm was present. And the question is: shall we follow reason and experience, and conclude, that the life which then began had a living cause; i. e. was imparted by a Creative act; or shall we accept the materialist's hypothesis, and defying experience and reason, assert, that it had a lifeless cause then, though it has never had one since? Surely science—which is nothing else than systematized experience—and reason, and common sense, coincide on this point with our Revelation.

However we conclude, this fact remains. Life could

* *Winds of Doctrine*, by Chas. Elam, M.D.

not begin gradually, however gradually it may have developed. It must have been by an abrupt act. The first and simplest protoplasm has got at its birth these three new and marvellous powers, or functions, (1) of selecting out of the adjacent inorganic matter and absorbing into its own organized structure those tiny particles which suit its wants: (2) of casting off those used up and effete, or not wanted: (3) of reproducing other cells, or protoplasms like itself. And it could not gain these powers in slow process of time; for it could not live at all without some of them in active exercise, whilst if it died before its seeds were ready, it is clear there would have been an end of it and them together.

Life once introduced into the world the progress of its developement offers no break of continuity. Whether this was by evolution or in some other manner, it seems from the evidence of the vegetable fossils to have been still from the simpler to the more complex, from the lower to the higher families. It was rather hastily taken for granted, that evolution is opposed to the revealed account of Creation, and of the earth's government of the Creator. Setting aside the difficulties which the hypothesis of evolution has yet to solve, and the gross exaggerations with which its devotees are encumbering it; the general principle that God's creation consisted in a series of successive developements, from the lower to the higher, and these effected at successive epochs of time, is not more plainly taught by evolution than by Genesis.

And the Scripture most positively denies that the machine of the universe once set going, goes on without the intervention of Him who made it, in monotonous mechanical obedience to the mechanical forces, the chemical affinities, the vital impulses first imparted to it. The

Bible teaches us the very contrary; that it is God Who upholds all things by the word of His power, Who sets bounds to the sea; Who giveth water to the thirsty land; Who clothes the grass of the field with its beauty; Who feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him; without Whom not a sparrow falls to the ground; in Whom we live and move and have our being. When Goethe and Carlisle spoke of that old theory "with noble scorn, as a "child dream of a dead universe governed by an absent "God," they were just getting hold of the fact Moses and David taught so long ago, and which Science also is now beginning to affirm. For now "Evolution makes it impossible to cast back design to the beginning;" i. e. to exclude it from the process. "According to this theory, "nature has no permanent mechanical constitution, confining it within certain limits: it is a series of progressive "and contingent events, or individuations in time,—every "detail of which is and must be radiant with Divine "purpose....Law is powerless to explain such a series of individuated objects and events succeeding each other, and "the only possible explanation is design, will," and direction. And again "In evolution, in every event the forces of "nature are bent and directed by the supreme mind, which "is never for a moment absent from nature: the smallest "event is individuated by it*," and has the mark of purpose, tending infinitesimally to the distant goal. Indeed one could heartily wish the evolution theory had fewer difficulties and irreconcilable facts to oppose it†, when

* Review of *Supernatural Religion*, *Church Quarterly*, April 1876.

† One great difficulty is the length of time required by it. The slowness and infinitesimal minuteness of the changes in species are such that "a million or a hundred million generations might be needed to establish "the characters of a well-marked variety." But from the laws of heat and its radiation Sir W. Thomson calculates that the genesis of life on the

one reads Kingsley's words : " Anyhow it is utterly wonderful, and your explanation of the history of the mocking butterflies, though the simplest, is the most wonderful of all : because it looks most like an immensely long chapter of accidents, and is really, if true, a chapter of special Providences of Him, without Whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, and Whose greatness, wisdom, and perpetual care I never understood as I have since I became a convert to Darwin's views*."

If you consider the problem which evolution has set itself to work out on the larger scale, this directing Providence is still more evidently essential to it. The problem is to show how from their first living unnucleated cells, the vegetable and animal races might have been developed, into that endless variety of structure, function, and form in which we now find them coexisting together—a bewildering mass of countless but mutual adaptations : all distinct in nature, modes of growth, desires and race ; yet all built on the same lines, and pointing to the same author. All these are by this hypothesis living for themselves, seeking only their own welfare, struggling only for their own existence : and yet all are so coordinated together, that in doing this they are serving both the general and the individual good of the rest in the most effectual way.

surface of our globe cannot have taken place more than 100,000 years ago. When therefore the geologist proves that *at the present rate* of deposition, subsidence and elevation of the earth's crust, the existing fossilized strata would not have accumulated or assumed their present position in less than some 100 millions of years—what he has proved is, that the present rate of change will not account for his phenomena ; it must have been something very different either in kind or degree. The phenomenal theory must yield to the physical science, *when the last is fully established.*

* *Life of C. Kingsley*, Vol. II. p. 175, Letter to H. Bates.

It is clear that the struggle for existence, and the adaptation to circumstances which springs out of it, cannot explain the wonderful adaptations of animals and of plants to each other's wants, without which mutual subserviency so great a part of animated nature could not live at all. It is not only the lower and older forms which serve the higher and later ones, it is equally the higher ones which serve the lower. What struggle for existence, for example, or what adaptation to circumstances made the animals manufacture carbonic acid gas, which, though poison to themselves, is needed by the vegetable world?

Another fact may be noticed. The theory assumes that a natural selection, or survival of the fittest, accounts for the progressive appearance of higher and more complete forms of life, by weeding out the less gifted: that "Progress is necessary to existence, and extinction is the doom of retrogression." But what are the facts? Instead of a struggle for existence, it has been truly said "if there be any struggle, it is to diminish existence." "Of the countless myriads born the greater number must be destroyed, and no infinitesimal advantage would help the creatures destroyed by their devourers*." Again, when there does occur a real struggle for existence, the lower forms of life stand their ground better than the higher and more complex ones. Surely the polype and the creeping thing that can be turned inside out or be torn to pieces and each fragment survive and grow, have a better chance of existence by stopping as they are, than by developing into a warm-blooded animal which cannot survive any serious injury. And when we can trace such a struggle to

* Of the *Medusæ* which swarm in the northern seas, and on which the Greenland whales feed, it has been calculated that in every square mile of sea water their number is to be reckoned by trillions.

its results, experience generally, if not uniformly, shows that self-adaptation to difficult conditions tends not to progress but to retrogression. The trees that struggle to live in the Arctic regions do not become more complicated or stronger, but degenerate into shrubs, and unable to perfect their seeds propagate themselves by suckers. The wild dogs and all hunted races of men,—the bush men of Africa, the tree men of Ceylon,—all show us how, to save life, the living creature will diminish its wants to the utmost, and with them, for the time at least, its capacities. And the fact that this degeneration is so exceptional may serve to remind us how far more real the picture of the Psalmist is, when he sings, "Thou openest Thy hand and "satisfiest the desire of every living thing; the earth is "satisfied with the fruit of Thy works*:" than are those morbid pictures of a ghastly and agonizing struggle for existence, in which the modern thought of a too-luxurious age delights to find a new sensation.

If, then, the actual result of evolution and of adaptation to circumstances proves to be a steady, and on the whole, continuous progress upwards, and at the same time an increasing adaptation of the individual species to the wants of other living organisms, then it is clear that evolution has some other end than the mere adaptation of structure to surrounding conditions, and that "some other "cause than this is bending all its effects in an upward "direction. The causes Darwin names may be instruments "in the hands of a higher purpose, but their action in this "direction is inexplicable except on the supposition of a "Guiding Will."

The next break in continuity, you will remember, occurs when we find conscious sentience added to organic

* Ps. cxlv. 16; civ. 13.

life and animal life begun. That animal life must have begun subsequently to vegetable life, seems clear from this; that whilst some vegetables are able to extract their sustenance wholly from inorganic matter and the surrounding air, animals, though supported by the same chemical elements, can only assimilate this food when it has been prepared for them by passing through vegetable organisms.

And this first introduction of conscious sentiency, which cannot be accounted for by any physical or chemical force nor by any known process of vegetable life, which can only be accounted for by postulating a living conscious antecedent,—this again we must call a creation. As Hegel well said, “the animal is a miracle,” is supernatural, “to the plant.” Whether this break can ever be successfully bridged over by evolution is not yet settled by the physiologist. That it is not the result of progress appears clear from this, that the supposed point of union is not between the highest form of the vegetable kingdom and the lowest form of animal life, but in the lowest form of both kingdoms, the single cell, scarcely distinguishable from each other in the microscopic germ, but always breeding true.

Now what does that prove? The argument of the materialist is, that because to his microscope and his chemical tests, the first germs of plant and of animal exhibit the same structure and are composed of nearly the same substances, therefore there is no essential difference between them. But the difference remains just as great as ever; what he has proved to us is, that this difference does not depend on, and cannot be accounted for by, either the organic structure or the chemical agents present. And consequently it must depend on something else. What other factor is there in the germ except the inherited life? It is not then the matter of the cell, nor its

structure and arrangement which builds up the growing organism, but the life inherited from the parent, which builds it up according to its own kind and nature*. "No physical cause is discovered by the microscope, why ova should develop each after its own kind," Kingsley says. "To a philosopher, a hen bringing forth a crocodile would not be so wonderful, as the fact that the hundreds of thousands of eggs never bring forth anything but hens†."

But if the hypothesis proved true, and a vegetable cell should be caught producing an animal germ, none the less when the consciously sentient animal came, there would be a new thing on the earth, unaccounted for by the preceding state of things, since consciousness can never be accounted for by any physical phenomena. "It is simply preposterous to suppose we shall ever be able to understand scientifically‡ the source of consciousness, or volition, not to speak of loftier things," Dr Tait writes.

And this mode of Creation, by the addition of a new power and new capacities, to those already developed, is yet more evident when at last man was brought into a world so wondrously prepared in a thousand ways to be his cradle, his foster-mother, and his school. Last in point of time, the connecting link between the physical structure of the lowest savage and that of the highest anthropoid ape seems totally wanting. And if, forcing the facts, we still

* See 1 Cor. xv. 37—48.

† 'For the development of the various forms of organic life, each true to its own permanent type, from undistinguishable germs, and all (on this hypothesis) from one unvarying bioplasm, we can assign no cause at all, except the One Cause.'—The Creative Idea is the only thing which could possibly contain wrapped up within itself all these results and intricate harmonies." Conder, *Basis of Faith*, Lecture 7.

‡ He uses the word here of physical science exclusively, in the modern manner.

assume that his animal life and its organic receptacle had come by evolution, and that man began to be in that lowest savage state to which we know too well he can degenerate, yet even in that stage we find his brain is not the result of adaptation to circumstances and surroundings, but *an adaptation to future development*. For, as Mr Wallace has shown, it possesses organs for which the savage has no use at all, and therefore no need; which will be useless to him until he has grown far on in intelligence and thought. In considering the possible evolution of man, he can only account for it by supposing "that the laws of organic development have been occasionally used as in the case of man, for a special end, *just as man uses them for his special ends*.*" But a higher authority goes further than this: not only must there have been a special bending of the laws of development to account for the connection of men with animals; the more we know the more improbable does the hypothesis of that connection become. Rudolph Virchow writes, "The connection of man with the rest of the animal world is a desideratum in science. I am quite prepared for such a result. I am now specially engaged in anthropology and I am bound to declare, that every positive advance we have made in prehistoric anthropology has actually removed us further from the proof of such a connection."

Here, then, we come to the boundary of the physical sciences. The gift of reason, the power of comprehending the movements, laws and properties of matter and of lower forms of life, and of voluntarily bending them to the accomplishment of man's own individual purpose; the possession of a moral conscience creating a new relation between God and His creature, and endowing him with the

* *Contributions to the Theory of Nat. Selection*, by A. R. Wallace.

power and responsibility of self-government; the capacity for divining the Being of His Creator, for worshipping Him, for communion with Him—all these are not more actual facts than they are beyond the sphere of physical science and its analysis.

And these gifts are wholly new in kind. It makes little difference whether you call these spiritual gifts instincts or moral powers; whether they were evolved out of sense impressions—an inexplicable break of continuity—or whether they were incarnated by direct gift in a living body made ready to receive them, and furnished with organs fit for their manifestation in outward act and speech. They are still what they are, not the properties of organic matter, but of mind and soul. Matter cannot communicate properties it does not itself possess: Life alone imparts life or fashions living organisms. Only living mind can impart living mind. The invisible world has not only touched the visible to add to it a new and higher impulse; it has united with it in man, called to be a ruler in the one, and made a citizen of the other.

Must we needs have some positive hypothesis—must we be able to picture to our own imaginations how this may have been done, before we can feel sure it could, or has been done?

Kingsley gives us the hint of one, when he suggests that it is not the material organism that determines whether the species developed from the 'one unvarying 'bioplasm' or the (to us) undistinguishable germ, shall be vegetable, animal, human: but it is rather the individual life imparted or inherited, that moulds the germ into an organism suited to its own needs and faculties. Here, perhaps, you may find the physical basis for such an hypothesis; i.e. that the lower mode or energy of life fashions

the simpler and lower organism: the higher life needs, and therefore fashions, apparently out of much the same materials, the higher and more complex organism.

And here imagination may run on to fashion some 'physical theory' of that resurrection life of which St Paul tells us in the xvth of Corinthians; when the new and spiritual energy of life imparted to the human soul in the New Birth shall have fashioned that spiritual and glorious body of power which shall be the meet instrument of its greater faculties and higher volitions.

The spiritual basis of such an hypothesis we surely have in those repeated declarations of Scripture, which tell us that God is the fountain of all life; that in Him it is that we live, and move, and are; that He gives life and breath to all that live; that He is Life, and that Life which is the Light of men.

Perhaps, then, we have been wrong in seeking to unravel the mystery of life by tracking it down to its lowest manifestations, as found latent in its first germs, when its highest manifestations are the nearest to its Fountain Head. Perhaps all these kinds of life which we are accustomed to may more truly be thought of as various degrees and modes of that life, which God who is Life imparts, nurtures and sustains and raises up, by imparting more and more of Himself to His creatures as they become capable of receiving more. That what we distinguish as simple organic life, sentient life, consciousness or mind, reason, conscience, spiritual life, are all but modes and degrees of that overflowing Life and Light, who makes Himself known to us only that we may grow capable of receiving more and yet even more of Himself.

But it is high time to return to our facts. At each stage then of the world's developement we find a new gift

imparted, which was not present in the previous stage. At each stage the new and higher gift is subjected to the conditions and limitations of the preceding stages, and by means of those conditions effects its own higher work. Energy acts on matter in obedience to its two properties, mass and inertia, and by virtue of those two moves and governs it absolutely, in accordance with its own laws, till it constructs a world ready to receive organic life.

Life, submitting to these laws of energy, builds up by their help its own organisms; profoundly modifying, arresting, bending chemical and mechanical laws, it subdues them to its service, and makes them work out its own growth and reproduction in certain definite forms and modes only, fixed not by their laws, but by its own. Mind in its first developement is governed both by physical and vital laws, and by a new set of conditions—sensations and volitions; and within definite limits employs both the former for the attainment of its own desires.

The human being, governed and controlled by all four, and by a new set of conditions and laws, is also able to govern them; and bends them, to an increasing extent, for the attainment of his own deliberate designs and spiritual needs.

Science cannot tell us whence these successive gifts came; Revelation, supplying the answer, brings these also under that law of order and continuity which is the mark of all Divine work.

To try to account for a universe thus built up, step by step, to such a consummation, by mere mechanical and unintelligent processes, is surely more foolish than he would be who studying a vast and glorious cathedral, and ignorant of the builder's art, should frame a scheme of natural laws to account for its growth. He should

show us, how it is the nature of the earth in certain circumstances to produce strong foundations. And of foundations to develop walls with string courses and buttresses: and of walls and string courses to complete themselves by evolving arches, and windows filled with tracery. And of these, by the law of progress, to evolve roofs and fretted pinnacles, and vast towers, and lofty spires. And of the whole building to store itself with carvings and sculptures, storied pictures and jewelled glass, and peals of joyful bells and solemn organs. And how in the struggle for existence, and adaptation to circumstances, environments helping, it came to pass that all these things together, in time evolved white-robed choirs, and liturgies and solemn worship, and the soul-inspiring anthem of the "Veni Creator."

Once more: if evolution, or developement is the law of the visible universe; the human race being the highest point yet attained in the earth, there must be something higher for the race to evolve into. For us that 'something higher' has been openly revealed in Christ. But as to physical science an absolute bar to the continuity of progress is put, by that prophecy of destruction, when the planets having plunged into the sun, the sun itself shall die out. Thus modern science bids us trace a continuous and obviously designed developement, going on through countless ages, without hasting and without resting, up to a long-drawn agony of dying out, and a final and fearful catastrophe. And then all comes to an end; the whole work of progress stops, its highest results are those so pitilessly destroyed. Analogy cries out against such a conception. Our reason tells us it is incredible. Physical Science can tell us nothing more; and yet she gives hints to our faith.

When inorganic matter breaks down to its units, it does not return to ether, but to atoms, to its manufactured articles. When physical energy degenerates, it is still stored up as latent heat in ethereal space, with quite as great a capacity for work as ever, only waiting a new call to action. What are all these stored up for, if there is no resurrection? Lastly, Science tells us there is no waste in the universe, so far: and yet is not that end, if it be the end, a fearful and horrible waste?

“All these difficulties disappear, if we believe the “Creator is still raising the work of His own Hands:” is still making His creation ready for the time, when this earth and this present cosmos passing away, He will fashion a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness,—a fit home for those whom He is now raising into the likeness of Christ, who are now receiving from Him the gift of Eternal Life.

LECTURE VII.

EVIDENCE OF MORAL SCIENCES AS TO MAN'S PRESENT CONDITION AND ITS CAUSES.

"God made man upright: but he has sought out many inventions."

Evil and good may be better or worse

In the human heart: but the mixture of each

Is a marvel and a curse.

R. BROWNING.

You will remember that the physical sciences left us with a prophecy and a suggestion.

They have shown us that the visible world in which we live has been brought to its present state by a long-continuous course of events, marked off into distinct epochs by the advent of a new and higher phenomenon, for the coming of which distinct preparation had been making in the preceding epochs of the world's development. They assure us that, at present, man is the most highly organized of terrestrial creatures, and the highest development yet reached. They prophesy the destruction of the visible cosmos: they suggest there is some higher development, some higher life than man's present life to be evolved in the future. But of what that higher life will be these sciences can give us no hint. It is moral science that has to do with what is highest in man.

Here revelation comes in ; and the first thing we have to remark is that it carries on the history of developement in a manner entirely consistent with and analogous to the history of those previous stages. It tells us it is God Who has been thus raising the works of His own Hands ; that it is His purpose still to raise them. That He has already shown us in the risen Saviour what that new stage of progress for men is to be : that He has already imparted that new power of Spiritual life which is to raise us ; and that He makes it effect this purpose by subjecting that new life to the laws and conditions of men's present nature, physical, intellectual and moral. Thus it tells us that God has all along been preparing mankind in and by their present stage of developement for that higher stage to which they are to be raised.

So far this ancient account proves to be strictly analogous to the process which recent science has noted in the previous stages of developement. But the Scriptures tell us something more : they affirm that in the case of mankind there has been a break in this continuity, that having received the new and higher gift of conscience and self-determinism, they have so used it as to degrade as nearly as they could to the condition of the mere animals.

It is on this point the moral sciences come in with their evidence. Their business is to observe, register, and account for the phenomena of our actual social and moral condition ; thence to explain the processes by which we have come into it : and lastly, foretelling the future from the past, to show to what condition we are tending—what prophecy of progress or of decay is in us. Thus here at last our human science and our divine Revelation occupy portions of the same ground, and the evidence we get is no longer incidental merely, but direct and positive.

i. Scripture tells us that God made man upright, with a twofold, or double nature: i.e. an organic, material body, endowed with animal life, and a living soul made in His own Image; and constituting him a moral being, capable of self-government, of progress, and of immortality.

ii. Scripture tells us that by their own act men fell from their uprightness, gave up their self-government, and so came into bondage to the impulses and laws of their lower nature and animal life; and still so fall.

iii. It tells us that God is delivering us from this bondage, and bestowing (not by compulsion but) on all who will receive it, the gift of a higher, spiritual, or eternal life. It tells us "that man's delivery and restoration are "dear to his Maker: that for man's sake the highest was "joined to the lowest, Divine power and love to earthly "degradation and pain."

This is the explanation which Scripture gives us of our moral constitution and our present condition. And we must notice here, that it is a quite consistent and intelligible account, if we take the whole of it. Man's double nature would make a fall from the rightful dominancy of the higher to the lawless tyranny of the lower possible. His possession of the higher nature would make his redemption from this bondage possible. But if he has not fallen, and if sin and selfishness be only essential conditions of his development, and therefore not really sinful, then no redemption from it would be necessary. The gift of a higher life might still be his, but for the Incarnation and the redemption there is no need; and it seems no possibility, unless men have fallen, as the Scripture asserts, and come short of the glory designed for them. On the other side we have the explanations given us of our moral constitution and our present condi-

tion, by the various Atheistic, Materialistic, and Deistic theories, which may be roughly summed up in three classes.

i. Those which assert, on the first point, that man's nature is not double, but is the homologous product of physiological or animal developement alone. The lowest form of these theories being the (I believe) quite novel one, "the essential beastiality of man": and the highest—that mind and conscience are merely "functions" of the brain.

ii. Those which teach, on the second point, that there has been no fall: but that, being at first developed in the lowest savage condition, man's moral sense has been the fruit of social circumstances alone. The extreme view here is, that man is an automaton and all his actions automatic: the highest view makes him virtually incapable of self-government.

iii. On the third point, the theory is that "man stands preeminent in the rank of living organisms": and that either the race will make indefinite progress, or "man" will be the progenitor of a still more highly organized "being, that shall carve out for himself a destiny more brilliant than we can now conceive possible," without his Maker's help apparently; whilst individuals are annihilated and Christianity fades away.

Now in investigating the mental and moral capacities of human beings, and comparing these with their actual condition and their social circumstances, moral science cannot fail to give some amount of positive evidence as to the two first-named declarations of Revelation: e.g. 1st, whether these are such as would in their full and natural action tend to produce moral or immoral conduct; a stationary condition, or one of upward progress; and

2nd, whether there ever has been such a fall as revelation tells us of. If there has been a fall, we ought to find in men's present moral condition such a disruption of natural tendencies, such an introduction of disorder in men and in society, as would show a creature out of harmony with his own nature, and a world out of joint. And though human science cannot tell us whether man's recovery is dear to His Maker, it can tell us, whether there is or is not a possibility of recovery and of progress for men without supernatural help from God, and without that gift of a new and higher life, which if actually given would constitute a new break and a new departure in the course of developement,—in fact a new creation.

But the subject is so vast, we can give but the barest outline of all this evidence: and I want therefore for the present to set aside all theories of morals and to consider from experience alone:

i. What is our actual moral condition? does it testify to a double, or an homogeneous nature?

ii. Is this condition the natural and healthy outcome of our moral constitution and social circumstances, as the materialists say; or is it an unnatural and morbid condition, as the Scripture asserts?

iii. Are the laws of our moral constitution such as will of themselves raise mankind in time to a higher and better condition; or is that impossible without God's help and a new power of life?

We must take this last question at another time; to-day I have to show that man's nature is double, and that there has been a fall.

i. That man's present moral condition is one of desperate conflict between opposing forces within him, and in society, is but too obvious:

It is a fact which cannot be denied. Thus, when in our search into developement we come to its highest stage, we find ourselves for the first time contemplating disorder mixed with and rioting against order, and all the contradictions of disobedient lawlessness, complicated with the steady on-working of physical, moral and mental processes. Now this is a new phenomenon. In all the previous stages of developement we found that wherever the higher condition is present, its laws and its processes are paramount. When energy set to work on matter, it did not fight against the inertia of matter, it worked by virtue of that inertia. When organic life began, it effected the construction of its organisms not by conflicting with chemical affinities or physical energy, but by employing both for its own purposes. When the conscious sentiency of the animal was added to organic life there is no trace of any conflict between the two. And when animals began to live in organized societies, there is no conflict between the self-regarding instincts of the individual and the common interests of the community. So far all works in harmony and in order. But at the next stage all is conflict. The higher principles of reason and conscience, —call them automatic or what you will—are at war with the lower principles of sensuous and self-regarding instincts; at war in each individual man, and in every society of men, and creating in both a confusion which too often amounts to chaos. Thus in the visible world all is in harmony and order; in the moral world, in man's world, it is not.

And then we are coolly told, it is because men are ignorant of nature's laws, do not understand, and so break them. But we should be glad to know if men are automata, what their understandings can have to do with this matter? Or do the insect societies live in

order and industry, because they understand social laws, and their own interest in observing them, better than we do? If our nature is homologous, as theirs is, why has it begun to fight with itself?

That this conflict points to an actually existing double nature in man, and that it makes us conscious of a mixed or double nature within us, is a simple matter of fact. Plato's beautiful parable, of the souls which seek for truth as their native pasture, gives us his interpretation of this conflict* :

"Let the soul then", he says, "be likened to the
 "combined power of winged steeds and a charioteer. Now
 "the horses and charioteers of the Gods are all both good
 "in themselves and of good extraction; but all others are
 "mixed; so that our charioteer drives with one horse
 "beautiful and noble and of noble descent; but the other
 "of opposite extraction and opposite character: our driving
 "therefore is necessarily difficult and troublesome.—And
 "the soul that best follows the Gods, raises the head of
 "its charioteer toward the region of truth, yet is confused
 "by its horses, and scarcely able to behold *That which is*†:
 "but at one time rises and at another sinks, and owing to
 "the violence of its horses, partly sees and partly not. The
 "rest follow, all eager for the upper region, but being
 "unable to reach it, they are carried round, sunk beneath
 "the surface, trampling on and striking against each other,
 "in endeavouring to get one before the other. Hence the
 "tumult and sweating and struggling is extreme, and
 "through the fault of the charioteers many are maimed

* Plato, translated by Cary (Bohn's Class. Library), *Phædrus*, §§ 54, 59.

† The word he uses here (τὸ ὄν) is, it is said, the nearest approach to the revealed name "Jehovah" the "I Am," to be found out of the Scriptures.

"and many break their pinions:—and all after much toil, depart without having succeeded in beholding *That which is*: and after their departure they use the food "of mere opinion."

Taking this parable with us let us read the experience of one of those greatest souls "who best follow the gods," as given us by Dean Church in his lecture on Pascal's *Pensées*. "Pascal looks upon the world in which he finds himself, and two things meet his gaze: on the "one hand the certainty of the moral law, the certainty "of its supremacy, the certainty of its excellence over "every thing else known to man." "And then he sees "a world out of joint, presenting the most contradictory "appearances, distracted by the most opposite tendencies, "with no remedy for its disorders, no key to its riddles. "Read man one way, and he seems made for God and for "truth; read him another, and nothing can express the "interval that separates him from all that is holy, perfect, "eternal; his blind stumbling through an existence that "has come to him from chance, the vanity of his life,—so "aspiring, so defeated, so undiscouraged; with the strongest "impulses to hope, but ever haunted by arguments of "despair; he reveals, by fits and starts, his greater and "better nature, in the originality of grand deeds and "lofty characters, but practically and in the long run, "he leads a life which he might lead without conscience. "There he is—this marvellously compounded creature, "strong even unto death—yet unstable as water, contra- "dicting himself through life; the slave of nature—which "yet bows to the spell of his power; the slave of habits—"and their creator; the slave of imaginations—of which "he knows the illusion; the slave of opinions—which he "has himself contributed to accredit; so ingenious—and

“yet so stupid; so wise—and yet so incredibly foolish; “able to do so right, yet constantly doing so wrong; “balancing between good and evil, sin and repentance, “till the wavering is cut short by death.”

Thus the answer to our first question is clear and certain. It is that we ourselves are out of harmony with our own nature, it pulls us different ways and sets us on contradictory ends. Whatever was our origin, we are not now homologous, but have a double nature, at war within us.

Then we come to the second question. Is this conflicting condition the natural and healthy outcome of our moral constitution and social circumstances? or is it an unnatural and morbid condition? has there been a fall? These are the two explanations now given, the first being the more modern, the latter the old one of the Bible.

Pascal could see but one explanation, “Man’s greatness “is greatness fallen, ‘*Toutes ses misères la prouvent sa* “*grandeur. Ce sont misères de grand seigneur, misères* “*de roi dépossédé.*’ For if, Pascal argues—if man had “never been corrupted, he would have enjoyed truth and “felicity with assurance. And if man had never been “anything but corrupted, he would have had no idea of “truth nor of beatitude. But unhappy that we are—and “more unhappy than if there were no grandeur in our “condition, we have an idea of happiness and cannot “attain to it; we have an ideal of truth, and possess only “a lie, alike incapable of being absolutely ignorant, and of “knowing with any certainty.” “That there is a perversion of man’s feelings and desires, a radical want in our “nature,” says a modern writer, “is a known fact proved “long ago, and resting on evidence which needs no fresh “confirmation. The disease of humanity has written its

"proofs on every page of history, has engraved itself indelibly on the human heart."

The modern explanation, the bestial origin of man, has been stated perhaps in its most advantageous form by Goldwin Smith, in his valuable little paper, "The Ascent of Man." Adopting as probable the hypothesis of evolution, he says, "Hence it appears likely that vice is the remnant of the lower animal not yet eliminated, and virtue the effort by which that remnant is being worked off." And he instances this, "That the lower animals are wholly selfish, whilst the ascendancy of the social over the selfish desires is in acknowledged connection with virtue."

We have not time to dwell on the details of these explanations. I can only briefly suggest some of the facts which bear alike on both.

You will see that this animal origin of man assumes that he first appeared on earth in his lowest and least organized, most savage form.

But this is not consistent with the analogy of other developements. Geological research has found, that the earliest representatives of each family of plants or of animals that successively appeared, were as highly or more highly organized than the recent forms of that family. Mr Carruthers has shown this in respect of plants*: Dr Elam† says of animals, "Whilst the higher families appear last‡, each family seems to have begun with its finest specimen so to speak, and appeared in the plenitude of its power, then dwindled and degraded, as though to make room for a higher developement." "Or," he asks, "have the mighty reptiles of the oolite, the ponderous

* "Evolution and the Vegetable Kingdom." *Contemp. Review*, Feb. 1877.

† "Winds of Doctrine," Chas. Elam, M.D.

‡ As they do in the record of Genesis.

“monsters that shook the earth in the eocene and miocene periods have these improved and been developed into the puny reptiles of the present time? has the megathyrion developed into the sloth?” The hypothesis that it was from these degenerates the next higher family was evolved, does not concern us now. The question before us is not from which lower family man could be evolved: but it is whether, when man appeared on the scene, he appeared in the plenitude of his power, as the Scriptures say, or in what is now the lowest stage of his degradation? And we find from analogy that if this last were true, there would be an apparent break of continuity in the order of developement previously observed.

But we have not to rest on analogy alone: Geology gives us direct though doubtless incomplete evidence as to the capacity of the primeval man. “Of the oldest (fossil) human skulls known,—those of the Engis and Cro Magnon caves,—the first are fair average skulls, and above the average of savage nations. The second are above the average of modern European skulls in capacity, being usually large and well formed*.” This I quote from Mr Alfred Wallace, who shares with Darwin the authorship of the *Theory of Evolution*. Prof. Virchow’s testimony is still stronger: he distinctly states that “The old troglodytes, pile villagers, &c. have heads so large, that many a living person would be glad to have such now. If we gather together the whole sum of the fossil men hitherto known, and put them parallel with those of the present time we can decidedly pronounce there are among living men a much greater number of individuals who show a relatively inferior type, than among the fossils known up to this time†.”

* *Transactions, British Association Meeting*, in 1876, p. 113.

† *Freedom of Science in the Modern State*, by Rudolph Virchow, M.D.

Clearly this points rather to degeneracy than to ascent from natural causes. There are other signs of this. There is this peculiarity in the condition of men, as compared with the other mammalia, that his life is shorter now than by analogy it ought to be. In other animals the period of growth is about $\frac{1}{10}$ to $\frac{1}{12}$ of the whole life. The lion which is full grown at 5, lives for 70 or 80 years. The dog, full grown at 18 months, is as old at 15 years as a man is at 80. Man living as long as the lion, is not full-grown till 20*. Thus his physical life is not in this respect the normal life: it is cut very short, and its brevity points to some primeval failure of vigour,—to the presence of some non-natural, i. e. some diseased condition, sapping his vitality.

Again, if this theory were true, the savage races we still have should be in some measure progressive. But for the most part they give this sure mark of degeneracy, that they are decreasing in numbers, and there is evidence that this had begun before a too-sudden civilization came near them. And as the first steps of all progress are mental, its absence among them when left to themselves is very instructive. Nearly all barbarous or semi-barbarous tribes refer all they know and believe to the wisdom of their forefathers, not to their own discoveries. In several cases, specially in Africa, when questioned by missionaries as to the meaning of their rites and ceremonies, they have not professed to understand them. All they know is, their forefathers who were wiser than they, and knew what ought to be done, practised these things and taught their children to do so.

Again, to support the theory of ascent as stated by Goldwin Smith; we ought to find some progress from

* The same proportion would give men from 320 to 400 years.

selfish to social instincts, from the lower to the higher animals. But we do not. The most manlike of the apes show no superiority in these respects over the other mammalia. And in point of social propensities, and in care for the wounded and aged, the mammalia are markedly inferior to the social insects, and to some kinds of birds, far less highly organized*. Turning to man, we find that this theory of his ascent from a low origin assumes that it is natural for him to prefer the higher to the lower instinct. Indeed, if it is not so, the theory of evolution fails at its onset. And the modern theories of the improvability of the masses,—e. g. “teach the people rightly, and “they will be virtuous: give them leisure and they will “improve their minds: give them higher amusements “they are certain in the long run to prefer them to the “lower and debasing ones:” all these widely-spread expectations surely show this is the natural course for men to follow. And therefore the yet wider fact, that men as a rule “see the better and choose the worse,” proves them to be in a non-natural, morbid state.

Still more important is the evidence we get from language on both points. This is an incorruptible witness: and it witnesses strongly to the fact, that vice, brutality, immorality, are, even in our present evil condition, not natural to man. Take such words as brutal, inhuman, monstrous, unnatural, perverted—what sense is there in epithets like these, if vice is the remains of what is natural to man, not yet eliminated by virtue? How senseless to call the man an “unnatural monster”—who has merely

* See amongst many like instances an anecdote in *The Life of a Scotch Naturalist* of some sea birds who carried a comrade when shot by Edwards, out of the reach of his gun. Many of the larger mammalia will kill a wounded animal of their own species,

reverted in a quite natural manner to the conduct of his ancestral parent! Why do we speak of "fiends in human form" if there is no instinct in us which asserts that sheer malignity is so unnatural to man, it must have come into him from without? Why do we call a man 'educated' if the process referred to has not been the drawing out his inherent capacities, but rather the rooting out of his natural characteristics and grafting in new ones? But on the main question—of the savage beginning of man, I confess this one sentence of Max Muller's seems to me final*. You will remember that in evolving men from apes, the great difficulty is to show how they began to talk. "The man-shaped apes became men, gasped after articulation, and "got it†." Now Max Muller has traced up our present languages to three great stocks, or root languages, and he asks, "Can we reconcile with these three great forms of language, the common origin of human speech? I answer "most decidedly, Yes....In these oldest languages there is "the stamp of *one strong mind*, once impressed, never "obliterated, and perpetuated as a law throughout all "generations." This is irreconcilable with the apish origin. The *one strong mind* which dominates us still was unquestionably not a gasping ape or a brute-savage. Need I remind you of another account of the beginning of language which is entirely consistent with Max Muller's discovery?

"The Jehovah God brought the beasts of the field, and "every fowl of the air unto Adam, to see what he would "call them. And whatever Adam called every living "creature that was the name thereof."

* Quoted by the Bishop of Derry. *Norwich Discourses*. "Man's Wedded Life,"

† These men-apes are, as yet, imaginary beings.

Archæology also, the incorruptible historian of the pre-historic ages, has no inconsiderable amount of evidence on this matter. The theory which seemed so neatly complete, of the pre-historic races commencing with the nearly brutal cave savages, passing through the flint or stone weapon age, the lake dwellers, the bronze and iron ages: has been answered by the remains of early civilizations, possessing copper, gold, pottery, and sculpture, and succeeded by the superimposed remains of savage life, and rude flint weapons. Thus Dr Schliemann found on the spot he calls Troy, the remains of four successive races, building on the same hill, and each over the ruins of the preceding race; of which the first and pre-historic tribe was the most, and the last the least civilized. The same phenomenon has been discovered in Italy and in France. Mr A. Wallace, in the paper quoted above, points to many similar pre-historic civilizations in the Pacific, in North and South America, and in Africa: in each case preceding savage life. He was considering this very question, whether it is possible to account for man's appearance by evolution? He pointed out, i. the extreme difficulty of accounting for his sudden appearance on the scene in a condition of comparatively high civilization: ii. the many indications that exist of a descent from a higher level, as well as of a gradual ascent from a lower one: and he suggested that "these considerations point to a different, and more suddenly acting agency in the production of man, than that which had sufficed for the "other creatures."

Surely all these facts, which entirely coincide with the Scriptural account of man's origin and early civilization, are quite inconsistent with the hypothesis of his first appearance as a gasping ape or brutal savage. And this is

still more clear when we come to consider his moral constitution.

You know the question here is, Did God create man upright and moral, or did he become what we call moral, by automatic associations, or by his social circumstances alone?

Now this last explanation does not afford an adequate account of man's complex moral constitution, or of his moral sense. Prof. Goldwin Smith says of it: "The supposed origin of moral sense and life in the relative permanency of social over personal impressions, is a very poor account of it, with all its beauty and tenderness, its heroism and self-sacrifice, to say nothing of spiritual life with its hopes and aspirations." And if it were the true account it would not help us: "for between that origin and its present manifestations, has intervened something so considerable, as to baffle any anticipation." "Calling this intervening force circumstance" does not alter its nature, nor exclude the "existence of a power acting through circumstance, as the method of fulfilling a design."

We cannot now however go into any theories as to the origin of our moral sense. Enough for our present purpose that we do, and by the constitution of our minds are compelled to, distinguish between right and wrong, just and unjust, true and false: and that we hold, and cannot help holding, ourselves responsible for the right or wrong character of our voluntary actions. Conscience witnessing with us, and our thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing each other.

Further, it is clear that however we got it, now we have this moral sense, it is the great source of the confusion within us, and of our divided condition. For by

virtue of this sense men are consciously placed under a law, which they sometimes obey and sometimes break : and hence comes all the confusion that results from broken relations and all the miseries that spring from disorder, introduced into an orderly universe.

Now is there anything in the emotional nature of man, or in his social circumstances, which would of itself tend to produce this moral disorder? If there is, then our present evil condition is our normal one. If there is not, then it can only be accounted for by a fall, and its cause not being found in the nature God gave to men, must be looked for in some external agency.

Man's moral constitution has been considered under three heads :

I. The motives which incite him to action : or moral dynamics.

II. The laws which secure the stability of his condition : or moral statics.

III. The instincts, or principles, which impel him to make progress.

We can only take the first to-day.

(i.) He is incited to action by his animal instincts and wants. And there is the hypothesis, that here is the root of his moral disorder. But it is hard to see why it should be so.

For all these appetites and instincts are in their natural exercise healthy, and the exertions on which they set men are directly serviceable to society, and for the development of their personal powers. Their natural law is this: they require satisfaction, and when satisfied their indulgence ceases to gratify. They are only hurtful when this natural law is broken by excessive indulgence: and this excess of desire is itself a morbid condition which

grows by indulgence. Animals have the same appetites, but not in this morbid excess: when their hunger is satisfied, they do not in their natural state go on eating, they do not make themselves ill by drinking. Some races of men have been and are being exterminated by vices of this character, but there is no such instance among animals. Men cannot then have inherited these vices from animals. They seem rather to point to the conclusion, that this unhealthy craving in men for indulgence beyond what is beneficial, is the result of ancestral self-willed excess, producing a morbid condition of body, and consequently an irritable condition of nerves and appetites, and so becoming "a law in our members, warring against the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members." The difference between men and animals in respect of these common instincts appearing to be, that the latter are controlled by a law of instinct which they cannot break; the former by their own reason and will under the rule of conscience which they can resist and break.

(ii.) Men are roused to action, in the next place, by their emotions and social affections. But each one of these in its natural exercise is both healthy and useful to society. Let us take for instance the one now most called in question*—self-love,—the desire to live well,—to enjoy pleasure. Without this any real emotion would be unintelligible. For an emotion rouses us to action by making us desire its gratification; but if we had no self-regard we should not care to satisfy our own emotions. Clearly it is our self-regard which sets us striving for that which gives us pleasure and satisfaction. Well, then, what is pleasure? Perfect pleasure has been defined to be the feeling which

* By the Altruists especially.

results from a perfectly fulfilled relation. It is very important to grasp this fact: you can trace it out in every natural pleasure, in moral and indifferent pleasures alike. For example, the pleasures we get from our senses, which have no moral character, all arise from fulfilled relations. There is a certain relation between vibrations of sound and our nerves of hearing: when the continuous vibrations answer to that relation, it is music and gives delight; if they are too fast, too slow, or conflicting, they give pain. So in mental pleasures; a new combination of ideas gives us pleasure, if it is in perfect relation to our habits of thought. If it is too difficult, it is painful; if too easy, it is dull; if it is out of harmony with our established associations, it is irritating. It is the same in all social and moral pleasures. The intensest pleasures are those which spring from the complete fulfilment of our highest and purest relations—i.e. from the relations of Persons to each other. Take for example the emotion of compassion, which at first sight is purely painful. But the pain of seeing another suffer is only felt whilst you are unable to complete the relation that emotion indicates, by removing the suffering: when you can do that, the pleasure is one of the most exquisite you can have. It is so strong, when increased by habitual exercise, that there is hardly any weariness or suffering such a man will not rejoice to undergo, in order to relieve the objects of his compassion. Now if he did this, without finding any pleasure in doing it, would his moral state be higher? would not his help be made odious to the sufferers? Thus, as Butler says, "Benevolence is to society what self-love is to the individual: and these are so perfectly coincident, that the greatest satisfactions to ourselves depend on our having benevolence in a due degree: and that self-love is one

"chief security of our right behaviour to others. Their "mutually coinciding, so that we can scarce promote the "one without the other, is equally a proof that we were "made for both"—"Conscience and self-love, if we understand our true happiness, always lead us the same way."

The same thing is true, in another form, of the defensive affections: they are defensive of moral relations*. Anger, resentment, jealousy, remorse, are the emotions which arise when we or others break these relations. It is impossible to conceive a moral society or a moral being to exist incapable of anger against injustice or cruelty. But as any excess in this class of affections must be mischievous they are all painful, and that naturally, because they are roused by broken relations. Love is pleasant. "Rage, "envy, resentment, are in themselves mere misery, and the "satisfaction arising from their indulgence is little more "than relief from that misery. That passion of resentment "—from whence men take occasion to run into the dreadful vices of malice and revenge,—even that passion, as "implanted by God in our nature, is not only innocent but "a generous movement of mind. It is in itself no more "than indignation against injury and wickedness, against "that which is the only deformity in the creation." When a moral relation is broken, then comes the pain of anger to rouse us actively to interfere and restore it; or at least to stop the breach from spreading. And thus instead of complacency the offender meets with disapprobation and shame and punishment.

This is the state of the case as regards pleasure and

* A moral relation is one which we can fulfil or break as we will. The correlative must be a conscious living being, or one regarded as such by us. The reign of conscience extends over the realm of consciousness only.

pain. Now one of the best definitions of 'righteousness,' or 'justice,' is that it consists in the complete and harmonious fulfilment of our personal, i.e. our moral relations. That is to say, when our feelings and our actions relating to any living beings, exactly correspond to, and fulfil the relation in which we stand towards them, they are just and right. They become evil as we fall short of or contradict that relation. So that here we come to a very noteworthy coincidence between righteousness and happiness.

It follows from this, that if the emotional constitution of men took effect in individuals and in society, happiness and morality would equally prevail. How is it in fact?

"Until the natural man, the merely moral man*,
 "becomes so enslaved to a corrupt nature as to lose
 "his moral sense, he not only perceives what is just,
 "true and kind; but he has such a preference and
 "approbation for them, as to derive a sensible pleasure
 "from contemplating them, and to find a happiness when
 "employed in them, quite distinct from all consideration
 "of their consequences. Whilst the sight of that which is
 "vile and brutal rouses in him an indignation which
 "strongly expresses the pain occasioned even by the view
 "of evil." Thus the happiness that results from duly
 fulfilled moral relations is still the highest emotional
 happiness men can have; and fulfilled relations create
 the highest good of societies. The pain and remorse,
 the shame within and the hatred from without which
 arise from breaking moral relations, are still the severest
 pain men can suffer: whilst it is these broken relations
 which create all the miseries of society.

And both this pleasure and this pain are the most enduring. None of our physical pleasures however legiti-

* *Psychikos*.

mate, none of our sensuous pleasures however strong, are lasting. The remembered bodily pain enhances the luxury of ease. But the remembered thought, or word, or deed by which we broke through and denied some close personal relation, and which is now irretrievable,—that memory is a present torture from which we must flee, lest our souls should wither and wholly fail in the fierce burning of remorse.

Such are the sanctions of conscience; sanctions self-fulfilling so to speak, which make it the highest interest of every human being and of all communities of men, to maintain these moral relations unbroken, and to enforce their fulfilment on all. It is clear, then, that we cannot find in the emotional constitution of men any adequate reason for the disorder which actually prevails amongst and in them. As there is nothing in the structure of the body which makes for disease, but all for health; so there is nothing in that of the emotions which makes for wrong, but all for right.

Neither is there anything in the natural circumstances of men to account for the moral disorder in which we are actually plunged.

It is true that born in a state of infancy, the body gets as it were the start of the moral affections of reason and conscience, in the formation of our earliest associations. But these ought not on that account to be unhealthy: and then we are born in families, and through infancy are wholly, long after infancy are to a very great degree, dependant on those whose completer experience is in favour of virtue; and whose instinctive affection guides them to choose what is best for their children, even when they have not chosen it for themselves. In a perfectly healthy family, where no subtle irritability from latent disease excited irregular and morbid desires and tempers,

the child's security from harm and enjoyment of good would be so bound up with and dependant on his relations with those in whose care he is placed, that his position alone could not fail to train him up a civilized, social, and therefore moral being. Even in the degraded and unnatural conditions of family life we too often witness now, experience tells us it is safer and better to leave young children to grow up in their own families, as long as any natural relations survive there, than to place them in the best public institutions, under the artificial discipline of the best-devised regulations.

And as men grow up into the wider societies of the tribe and nation, they are still so dependant for their own well-being and for the fulfilment of their hopes on those around them, that there is everything in their natural circumstances to draw out their social affections, to incite them to habits of order, mutual help, justice and forbearance.

Such was the education provided for men by their social circumstances; with such care were they begirt around. And we have it still when we start on our upward course, from infancy.

"Parents first season us: then schoolmasters

Deliver us to laws; they send us bound

To rules of reason, holy messengers,

Pulpits and Sundays, sorrow dogging sin,

Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,

Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in;

Blessings beforehand, ties of gratefulness,

The sound of glory ringing in our ears;

Without, our shame, within, our consciences,

Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears."

Let us stop here for a moment: there are, as you know, two explanations of this care: one is, that all these

exquisitely adjusted emotions, moral influences, checks and stimulants are 'environments' resulting from the action of physical energies and chemical affinities, producing social affections and instincts without any intelligent design. The other is, they are all the marks of a loving Father's care. That it is He Who has been teaching all,—as of old He taught Ephraim,—“to go, “taking them by their arms,” “drawing them with the “cords of a man, with bands of love;” but that still, as ever of old, “His people are bent to backsliding, and will “not know Who heals them.” Surely it cannot be scepticism that can hold the first explanation—only the grossest and most childish credulity could assign such results as these to causes so inadequate, so totally irrelevant.

To go on with our argument: It is when we compare the natural results of these emotional tendencies of our nature when acting in such social circumstances, that we see some other cause has intervened to produce the discrepancy actually existing, between the moral causes to which men were subjected and the immoral results we find. This discrepancy is witnessed to by our moral sciences, quite as strongly as by Scripture. And though moral science cannot tell us what that event was which occasioned it,—for that is a matter of history, and clearly it preceded the historic ages,—yet it points strongly to the general truth of the Scriptural account, that man was constituted upright, and is fallen. Just as the physical sciences cannot complete their account of the visible Cosmos without postulating an intelligent, far-seeing, and mighty Designer: so neither can the moral sciences explain the present condition of the moral Cosmos, which is partly chaos, without postulating a fall; i.e. some

primeval breach of men's true and natural relations. Scientifically, then, we should be bound to adopt this.

And if we go further and ask, which relations did man break to produce such wide results as these: then we find that the breach of some one or more of men's physical and social relations will not explain that disruption of his whole complex nature which actually exists. These must be broken one by one, for no one breach would break them all: and then the rest remaining entire, would by the law of habit be so strengthened, as that their fulfilment would become morally certain. In truth, we see this phenomenon constantly. We see a man thoroughly unhealthy physically, and yet a good citizen and exemplary in his moral and spiritual relations. We see another a very bad citizen, yet an admirable father and husband: or he may be just and kind to his neighbours and yet a tyrant at home. Again, a man may be deficient in mind and yet morally good: he may have the intellect of a Goëthe and the vices of a Borgia. Hence it seems that a failure of one of these subordinate and derivative relations would not suffice to account for that continual failure, which we now find amongst them all in turn. But the root and cause of all these relations is that which subsists between each one of us, and the First Cause of our being, the Creator of our bodies, the Father of our spirits. This is the relation involved in the fact of our conscious individual existence; the relations of family, nation, and race are made binding on us by His appointment only. And thus it is probable, that the breach of that fundamental relation would fully account for the disorder which we now find breaking out in every part of our complex nature, and for that rupture of each one of those derivative relations in turn which we find actually occurs. For as

these have a binding force on our consciences, only because we have been placed in them by our Maker, it is reasonable that our relation to Him being broken, should loosen the hold of all the rest. Thus the account of the Scripture, that it was not any moral failure towards their fellow-creatures, but a religious failure by direct disobedience to God, which brought mankind, alone of all the creatures on earth, into this diseased and morbid condition:—this account is so far supported by moral science, that it gives an adequate account of the facts, and the only one so far as we know, that is adequate. Again we say, we are bound by the rules of inductive science to accept it. It is equally borne out by the evidence of history. History tells us that religion everywhere is the dominating power in the life of men, “fashioning it after its own image;” but that everywhere also “it is the passionate attempt to renew the “bond broken between humanity and Divinity, the search “for a sufficient expiation and a sure reconciliation with “God*.”

Now the fact that there has certainly been a fall of man, and that probably by disobedience to God, is important in two ways.

First, it is important as direct evidence: as showing us again, that another fundamental fact declared to us in our divine Revelation, is on the independent and cumulative evidence of the moral sciences shown to be most highly probable. And, speaking logically, each such fact established, makes the other facts declared by revelation more probable.

When you find that a man's account of any events is substantially true on those points you have tested by other evidences, and becomes the more evidently true the more

* Pressensé.

you search into them, common sense bids you expect that he will prove veracious on the rest. When you find that a philosophy, whose several parts so hang together that they cannot be held separately, is true in those parts which you have examined or can examine; the legitimate conclusion is, it will most probably prove true on those you have not or never can examine. Thus there is already a strong presumption, that as the Scripture assertion of a fall is true, its assertion of a redemption will be true also.

Then, secondly, this fact of the fall of man makes a very great difference in the moral aspect of the evil, sin, and pain, that are in the world. Had that moral evil and the consequent suffering been the natural and necessary result of the constitution God gave; had the world been so made that it must produce sin, vice, and misery, then it would have gone far to show, to minds like ours, that the world's Constructor was not a righteous, or a benevolent Being.

But now that we find this evil is the result of a breach of His laws, of wilful disobedience and resistance to His Will; that it is not the result of His order and purposes, but of their violation;—this places the whole problem in a wholly different aspect: His laws are holy and just; His order is in every part of it love and good-will: evil and misery are contrary to His nature; and He is on our side when we are fighting against them.

We cannot yet go into the question how the fact of the fall being suffered to take place is reconcilable with God's power and foreknowledge. Moral science can tell us nothing concerning this, for it is a question of God's ways, not of our own.

But the simplest rules of reason tell us, that before we can enter on that inquiry,—far more before we arrogantly

pronounce them irreconcilable,—it is necessary we should understand first, what those attributes are ; and secondly, what the Scriptural account of the matter really is.

For the fact of the fall is never separated in Scripture from the work of the redemption : and therefore its account of these two great facts must be understood together to be understood at all.

Besides, that work of redemption is not yet completed, and cannot therefore be fully comprehended. God has many things to teach us concerning it, but we cannot bear them yet. Nor does it seem probable that this work of redemption and sanctification will be fully comprehended by us, until in the kingdom of Heaven we shall see the whole redeeming and sanctifying work of God in Christ fulfilled : until all enemies—sin, and suffering, and death itself—being destroyed, Christ the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.

LECTURE VIII.

EVIDENCE OF THE MORAL SCIENCES AS TO THE NECESSITY, EFFICIENCY, AND POSSIBILITY OF THE REDEMPTION.

*"No man can by any means redeem his brother
Nor give to God an atonement for himself;
For costly is the ransom of their souls,
So that they must let that alone for ever.
But God shall redeem my soul from the power of Hades."*

BISHOP HORSLEY'S Translation, Ps. xlix. 7, 8, 15.

WE have considered the evidences which moral science can afford us, as to man's original condition, and as to that fall into bondage to his lower nature, of which the Scriptures inform us.

The subject before us to-day, is the further declaration of our Revelation,—that God is delivering us from this bondage, and bestowing on all who will receive it the gift of a higher, a spiritual or eternal life. And here, as no human science can inform us of what God's purposes are, the evidence of moral science is necessarily limited to these three points:

i. Is such a redemption of man by the direct interposition of God's creative power necessary? is it true that moral science shows any probability that man's own nature

may in process of time work out his deliverance from his present evil condition by a natural developement?

ii. If it is necessary, is the redemption offered us in Christ such, as from consideration of men's moral constitution and wants would appear to be a real and efficient remedy?

iii. If it would be efficient, is it a possible remedy? i.e. is there any capacity in men's moral nature for receiving it; and any moral evidence for that future life which is involved in it and essential to its consummation?

Our first proposition then is, that divine redemption is necessary. To establish this, we must go a step further in our inquiry into man's moral constitution, and ask, what are the laws that secure the stability of his condition? and what are the principles that impel him to make progress?

Now, the law of moral stability is the law of habit. It rules indeed in all living organisms, and enables them to adapt themselves, within certain limits, to new circumstances. But it is in men's moral and mental constitution alone that it clearly secures steady personal progress. Other species of living things, as far as our experience goes, remain stationary. The animals in their natural state want no better life than they have, and in historic times have apparently neither progressed nor fallen. But men do: they desire to live well, and as soon as they succeed in that, they struggle with an increased energy of desire to live better. And the higher men get, the more intensely do they want to attain something higher and better still, and the more discontented they become with their actual condition. It is possible that this wholesome discontent which urges men to struggle upwards, creating civilization on the way, is one of the fruits of that fall which made us know misery and dissatisfaction: and that He Who alone

can overrule evil, is thus bending our very rebellion to the working out His purpose of raising us nearer to Himself. However that may be, it is certain that the higher men rise, the more exalted and the further above them is the ideal for which they long and strive.

And they never cease to hope for it. Hope is so natural to man, it is scarcely possible to root it out: it is the last thing crushed into a dormant state, by long generations of oppression and misery. It is only the lowest savages who show no desire to better their condition, and indeed seem unable to imagine a better one. These make no more effort to improve than the animals do, but instead of remaining stationary as the animals do, they commonly are retrograding. And that, it seems, for want of hope. "Hope is an essential condition of all human progress. "There is no law of human nature more sure than this, "that men will not with full activity use the present, unless they are sustained by the future. And if we truly "live only while we energize, we certainly only energize "while we hope. It is so in all human industry: it is not "the wealth we have, but that we hope to acquire, that "makes us toil. It is not the knowledges we have gained, "but those we hope to discover, that rouse the mind to "exertion. It is the same in moral action; if we are not "pressing toward a purer and higher morality than we "have yet attained in practice, our morality is dwindling." There is, then, this essential difference in the action of the law of habit on animals and in man. In those it acts supremely, preserving them in an hereditary and stationary condition. In men it is seized on by a higher power than its own—that of hope, and is employed to subserve a higher purpose, at once securing stability and impelling progress. Thus hope is a part of our nature: and that it

is so, creates a new difficulty for those who seek to evolve men's moral nature solely out of animal instincts and organization. At any rate, its presence strongly supports the theory that men were made for progress.

And when we turn to experience, we find, I think, it is still more natural for us to progress than to retrograde, to learn more than to forget, to gain experience than to lose it. But this we certainly find, it is scarcely possible for men to remain stationary. And this because of the law of habit—that great law which determines the moral history of men. It is by virtue of this law that those mental associations are formed, which so greatly determine the growth of our minds and our moral character. It is by this law that our voluntary efforts enlarge our power of attention, increase our moral sensibilities, change our character. It is by this law of habit, that the due fulfilment of any moral relation has its reflex action on individual character, by increasing affection for and interest in the social co-relative. For every action which we consciously and voluntarily perform is, as we have seen, the result of an emotion impelling us to it. And that action by the law of habit has a twofold effect: it makes the emotion stronger and the action easier on repetition. But the emotion which is not carried out into action grows weaker by repetition; we get used to that which roused it and cease to be excited by it*. It is not only that we form a habit of resisting that emotion, it is also that the emotion itself dies away and we cease to feel it. As we get used to see suffer-

* A familiar instance of this you have, in the rapidity with which the readers of novels become 'blasé' to all natural events and situations, and demand sensational ones, to arouse the nearly worn-out emotions of compassion, indignation, and interest. These are worn out because they are not carried into action.

ing without helping it, we feel less and less pain in witnessing it. As we refuse to act on the impulse of anger, we get to feel less angry: so that it becomes first easy to control it, and then natural not to be provoked to it.

On the other hand, the tendency of actions is to become easier by repetition. So that a slight emotion will rouse us to a course of action which has become habitual to us, with a more persistent energy than the most violent emotion at first secured. "Thus by accustoming ourselves to any course of action, we get an aptness to go on, a facility, often a pleasure in it. The inclinations which made us averse to it grow weaker; the difficulties lessen; the reasons for it offer themselves of course to our thoughts on all occasions; the least glimpse of them becomes enough to make us go on; whilst the contrary principles being accustomed to yield, do so habitually and of course*." So that when any affection is thus steadily acted on for a sufficient time, its power over use becomes almost irresistible. In this state of things there will be no change in the conduct, unless a new, and therefore not worn-out motive is brought to bear on the man. We may indeed, within certain limits, renew the old motive for ourselves by compelling attention to its exciting causes†, as when we 'nurture our anger to keep it warm;' or it may be suddenly presented to us in a new and overpowering form by circumstances. But through and after every such change of direction this power of habit works on, tending to make each new moral and mental condition which we enter a permanent basis for further progress *in the same direction*. It is in the moral world what the force of gravitation is in

* Dr Abercrombie on *The Moral Feelings*.

† "The test of a habit is, that obedience to it shall cost no effort; or that discontinuance of the custom has become painful."—ARISTOTLE.

the physical world. It can be bent in new directions, but it is always at work. Its results are summed up in that irreversible law of God's justice, laid down by the Saviour, "To him that hath shall more be given. From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that he seemeth to have."

Now it is obvious that such a law as this was absolutely necessary for a finite moral being intended to make progress. If the labour of attention and thought did not become easier by exercise we should never acquire a higher mental power than that with which we started. If the practice of self-control under the guidance of our parents and of society left us just as liable to yield to momentary impulses as ever, no training and no discipline would have the least abiding effect upon us, and self-training would be equally impossible. Mental and moral growth are possible to creatures such as we are, simply because mental and moral habits can be formed. And the nature of these higher habits are such, that it seems they must be formed by the personal and voluntary effort of the individual. A child may be compelled to attention and thought, but if her will has all the time refused to consent to the effort, she will leave school not with the habit of thought, but with the habit of hating to think. Inherited qualities may possibly make the acquisition of such habits more easy, but we have no experience to show they give them without the labour of acquisition. "Attention is consciousness, applied by an act of will to a given object of thought." And on a man's ability to concentrate his attention on one train of thought, steadily refusing attention to all other trains impertinent to it, on this depends his power as a thinker. This power of commanding attention is the secret of genius and the fruit of a self-determined habit.

It is the same in moral excellence: our will cannot decide our feelings: it decides our actions mainly by compelling attention to those facts and motives which influence us to a certain line of conduct, and by refusing attention to those which would deter us from it. Apart from all questions of self-determinism we can, as a matter of fact resolutely attend to the one set of motives, and refuse attention to the other, till habit formed relieves us from the strain.

Here comes in the subtle link with physical conditions, when the irritable body compels attention to those cravings the indulgence of which reason and conscience forbid. And the prolonged exertion of attention of thought equally demands that vigour and health of brain, which our physical organization appears to have been framed for. Not having this in our present fallen condition, we come again on that feebleness, that want of life-power, which should have enabled us to rise with pleasure to the full exercise of our mental and moral capacities, and have thus secured to us that continuous progress which the law of habit involves.

But thus we see that if men were born, and grew up in those conditions of moral and physical health, which the constitution of their double nature indicates as their normal state, they might, and so far as we can see would, have advanced individually, to a state in which the higher motives and feelings would have obtained an habitual preponderancy. Moral relations fulfilled would have grown stronger and stronger in their claims, whilst the pleasure derived from their fulfilment must have become more and more intense. And this moral power of self-direction, reacting on mental desires, would have secured to the generality that now rare gift of genius, 'the patience of

attention': which being adequately sustained by physical vigour, no limits to mental progress can be assigned. Thus hope placed before man to lead him on, habit following after to secure each step, endless progress and increasing happiness in both directions lay before him as his natural course.

How far we are from being in this course now, we have already considered. The questions we are now asking are, can men by any self-effort, get back into it? or will the natural struggle for existence in time raise the race into it? I have dwelt too long on this law of habit. But certainly the moral and mental constitution which men actually possess, have at least as great a share in determining their destiny, as their physical and material constitution has. And it is very important here, for if you thoroughly grasp this law of habit, you will have the key to most of the moral objections brought against Revelation. For this law, which is the ladder by which men can climb, has to fallen men a very terrible significance. Habits of evil, which in this disordered world are too often more easily formed than good habits, since they can be formed by mere inertia, have exactly the same power as habits of righteousness. And thus, reversing the healthy process, it appears that men may pass into a state, in which all the higher emotions being practically eliminated, all the lower ones strengthened, distorted and vile, conscience will speak to a deadened ear. Her means of rousing action are all dwindled and gone. The man finds himself so tied and bound with the chain of his sins, as to be past self-help; he can no longer arouse himself, or change his own course*. And then he passes on, in hardening habit, till

* We have an acknowledged example of this process in the case of drunkards.

he becomes so "dead in trespasses and sins" as to be past any human help. Thence lower still, to a state in which all moral relations have been so broken by him, so trampled down, disregarded, violated, that none are left to him; his soul responds to none. Isolated, utterly alone, dead to man and to God; alive to satisfaction only by his sense of its utter absence. We seldom see this here; but it appears to be the inevitable effect of the law of habit.

There are many checks provided against it: checks intended, as we believe by God's Providence, to drive the sinner back from this doom; and which do unquestionably hinder it. These are pains attached to each downward step; the reproaches of conscience, the ill-will and blame of others, the arbitrary punishments of human law, the loss of happiness through broken relations; the pain of health lost, of discontent, of remorse; and over all, in place of hope, the brooding darkness of a great fear. All or any of these may rouse a man to gather up all his strength for one supreme effort to break through the chains of habit. But as the habit grows stronger both his strength and his desire to resist it are dying out. And this shows how false an idea they have, who think a man may go on weaving nets of evil habits about his soul all his life, and then by an arbitrary pardon get rid of their consequences. Those consequences are not arbitrary punishments to satisfy justice: they are an actual dying and they must end in moral death, unless he breaks through those habits and casts them off, before the capacity for progress which was in him is wholly converted into a capacity for degradation. And to ask him to do this, is in many cases worse than bidding him "make a withered palsy cease to shake"; it is asking the dying man to renew his life, it is bidding the dead make himself alive. This law of habit is as certain in its

operation as the law of gravitation ; how can *we* set it aside, or free ourselves from it ?

The pervading dominance, combined with and acting on men's twofold nature so symmetrically and harmoniously correlated to each other, shows us indeed that men were so constituted by their Creator, as that constant upward progress was their natural destiny. But now this natural sequence is interrupted and the very law which tended to and should have been for our life, is become to us a tendency to death. And hence the social surroundings of vast numbers of men are such, as to make any self-originating effort at progress almost morally impossible to them. Among those who are more favourably placed, disease and vice prevail to an unnatural extent. And when by dint of human culture and civilization (apart from religion) these have been repressed in one form, history tells us they have only broken out in another, more subtle and often more dangerous, because less openly destructive. History points to no darker page than that which records the outcome of Grecian culture and Roman law in the dying Empire of Rome.

Thus moral science shows us that man's redemption will not be accomplished by the natural on-working of his constitution, and that it cannot be effected by his own efforts, because on the whole and in the long run men cannot continue the effort.

And what it does tell us is more fearful than any tidings of eternal punishment would be ; it is of permanent evil, of abiding degradation. The problem it puts before us is not of punishment ; it is not even whether the suffering that moral evil brings with itself here is eternal ? it is whether evil itself, thus perpetuated by habit, is abiding ? And moral science answers that it is as enduring

as the life of the soul. It tells us also that we can neither undo the evil done, for the past is for ever out of our reach; nor put an effectual end to the evil consequences which flow from it, in ourselves or in others. That which is done cannot be undone. We cannot deliver ourselves, nor other men from that on-working of evil habit which is forging our sins into a chain. There are three alternatives which have been wildly demanded, which a sober moral science, dealing with facts not with wishes, wholly rejects. For it tells us,

i. That if that power of choice, which alone makes us morally responsible for our actions were taken from us, and we were made to do right by necessity,—we should cease to be moral beings, and becoming mere automata, should lose our moral life and all its happiness: there would be no moral right for us to attain.

ii. It tells us, not indistinctly, that if by miraculous interposition suffering were ever to be broken off from evil, and peace and joy substituted for this natural result of broken relations, man's moral nature would be reversed from a man's into a fiend's. And again it tells us,

iii. That if the law of habit should be done away with by an act of omnipotence, the possibility of progress would be gone. Where then is hope?

Certainly not in ourselves nor in social conditions, for both are perverted and diseased. But the analogy of physical and psychological sciences may suggest whence hope might possibly be looked for. We have seen the evidence these sciences give us, as to the change of laws into new directions. It appears probable that the laws which govern sequences in each successive stage of developement, can only be bent from their natural results by the bringing in of a new and higher power, with laws

of its own which can, so to speak, take possession of the lower law, setting it to work in a new direction, and for higher ends*. Hence it appears possible that the introduction of a new and higher power into our nature might bend this law of habit from its natural tendency, and employ it in building up a new creature.

If, then, any deliverance from the tyranny of evil habits were promised to us, we must, judging from analogy, expect it to come from a new and higher kind of life imparted to men. And that would best be named a new spiritual life, seeing it is specially our wills that need revivifying. But perhaps all that our science can teach us is, what *it is* we want; and this it tells us plainly enough.

"Tis life whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant,
More life, and better, that I want."

Here then our divine Revelation comes in once more, to meet the difficulties presented by human science, and to fulfil, in a fuller and higher sense than reason could have dreamed of, those faint suggestions of possible hope which science could make. Left to itself our moral science lands us in a chaotic condition, not as yet wholly evil, not good, but tending to become worse, and wholly irremediable. That a remedy for the present condition of mankind is needed is established by the general consent of all. That a remedy has always been longed for, sought for, hoped for, is an historical fact. Every philosophy ever broached, every religion ever embraced, has had this for its object. That without such a hope our present condition would be intolerable, is a fact to which thoughtful men have testi-

* Something of this kind seems to occur, as we have seen, when life seizes on physical force and its chemical affinities, and makes them work for the construction and nourishment of its own organisms.

fied in every historic age, with increasing vehemence as an ameliorating condition has given them space for thought. Without such a hope of redemption, joy of heart, that great necessity of our nature, would be madness: "without it, the mother's joy in the birth of a child would be unintelligible.—Without it, the world would have nothing to show, but sinners who godlessly mock in their sin, and sinners who helplessly weep beneath it."

The answer then to our first question is, that redemption is necessary; that it cannot come from man's own efforts, because he cannot give himself more life-power: that it cannot come from the on-working of his present constitution, because that is determined by the law of habit, which binds him down to the evil course he is in.

Thus redemption if it come at all must come to him from above. The direct creative interposition of God is necessary to effect it.

And so we come to our second question:

Is the redemption offered us in Christ such, as from consideration of man's moral constitution and his actual needs, would appear to be a real and efficient remedy?

Our second proposition affirms that it is. To establish this we must ask what change in man's condition or nature would remedy his present evil state?

The remedy must be coextensive with the disease. The Scripture affirms that Christ's redemption is: "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." But how? Man's present evil state affects his whole being, body and mind and soul alike, the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. It is clear no remedy could be of avail that did not give to man a power and intensity of life that shall enable him to realize the greatness of his capacities, to fill up, so to speak, the grandeur of his

nature, and make him once more master of himself. This is the kind of remedy we have referred to, as conceivably guessed at from the analogy of developement. But this by itself is a very inadequate remedy. For one thing, if a vigorous power of life could be poured into a sick and disordered frame, it would but give increased vigour to the disease. And so here; before we can be fit to receive any new power of will, the disease of our wills must be removed; our evil habits must be broken off, and replaced by a new and right direction of desire and emotion. We must repent, and be born again. The remedy then which alone can meet the actual need is twofold: the deliverance from the disease of our nature (i.e. from the perversion of our wills and affections, from our depraved physical condition) and the gift of a new and higher life. Now this is just what is offered us in Christ. He offers to take away our past sins, and their evil consequences: He offers to deliver us from the disease of our nature; to give a new and higher life to us; to deliver us from this 'body of sin,' to raise us anew, clothed in incorruptible and glorious bodies.

There can be no need to show that such a remedy as this is a reasonable one, in the sense of being efficient; that it would be not a superficial but a root remedy, and exactly that which our present condition needs. The question is, is it reasonable in its process—are the causes named in it adequate to the results assigned to them? are the means by which it is to be effected suitable means, such as might be expected to act on men in the manner alleged? The starting-point, the first means of redemption, is the forgiveness of sins. That is the taking away of sins past, and the undoing their consequences. The forgiveness we need and our Saviour proclaims, is *not* the remit-

ting the punishment of sin, but the undoing the sin itself, and taking it away with all its sinful fruits in ourselves and in others: for by the law of habit the fruit of sin is more sin, in the sinner himself and in others also, who are made worse by his sin, and hand on the evil to other generations after them. Now to be told God is merciful and will not punish us does not help us really. It leaves us and those we have injured just as sinful as we were, and tells us only God will not mind. And that leaves us without any hope that what we have done will ever be undone in them or in ourselves. If you had wantonly set a huge mass rolling down a mountain side, and saw it crushing a group of children at play below, and in your horror cry out why are such things allowed? would it comfort you to be told "the law here is very merciful, and as you are so sorry for what you have done, you will not be punished"? Would not your only relief be, if the law could recover the children and restore them to health? or at least so use your act as to save you from committing it again and to deter others?

Now whether God can thus undo what has been done, and whether He will, we cannot tell apart from His own revelation. But this we can see, by the light of His revelation to us of ourselves, that sin and wrong-doing is the one evil we have to fear: and that it is an essential condition of our redemption, that we shall be set free from the burden of our past sins, and of all their consequences, "having no more conscience of sin;" as well as from that power of evil habits which binds us down to sinning again. Both these are supernatural things to ask for: and both we are told are being done for us; the first by the Atonement of Christ, the second as the result of the Atonement.

Do we attach any distinct meaning to that word?

Sin has broken men's relation to God, and it seems has interrupted and cut them off from the holy and elevating influences which would have flowed to them by realizing that relation. It is Christ's at-one-making which we are told establishes a new relation between the Holy One and sinners. If then our sin has caused another to break her relation to God: and Christ by His Atonement creates a new and higher relation between her and the Father; then He has undone the evil we did; and our sin, so far as it injured her, is taken away.

It is quite obvious men could never have restored their relation to God of themselves, still less create a new one. It is reasonable that God, to Whom all our relations, the sources of all our happiness, are due, should be able to restore the old, or create a new one, if He will. "That a "Being able to make another self-conscious being distinct "from Himself, should be able to set right what that being "has set wrong, seems to follow of simple necessity. He "might even, should that be fit, put the man in the "way of making up for what he had done: or at least "put it into his power to ask and receive a forgiveness "that would set all right between him and the person "wronged*." I would merely regard these as suggestions of part of the meaning of the Atonement. There are many ways of stating the Atonement which may not seem to us just or holy. But all human ways of expressing a Divine relation must have this defect, they cannot fully express more than the human side of it, because the Divine side passes understanding. The message as divinely given is this: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto "Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." That is the Divine side of the new relation: and then—

* *Thomas Wingfold, Curate*, by G. Macdonald.

"as though God did entreat you by us, we pray you in "Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God;"—that is the human, the responsive side. The Divine action is necessarily beyond our comprehension: if it were within it, it would want one mark of Divinity. "And therefore the "Church's wisest teachers have never attempted to frame a "theory of the Atonement: all human conceptions of the "redemptive act must needs be most inadequate; and if "any one of them be taken as expressing the whole, and "pursued into its consequences we believe it will land us "in false conclusions. But we confess with all humility "and thankfulness that Christ Who died for us is the "Atonement,—is the Way in which the Father's wise and "holy love has wrought, to reconcile us to Himself."

Now it is reasonable that this entering into a new and higher relation to God, should also be the commencement of that new and higher life of which the Gospel tells us: that is to say, the higher life involves higher relations, and the fulfilment of higher relations demands a higher life-power. As it is described to us by our Lord and His Apostles, it is not merely a relatively increased vigour of man's soul, it is a new life differing from the old not only in degree but in kind. The terms used involve a change, analogous apparently to that which science showed us, when conscious sentient life was added to organic life; and again when moral life, reason and conscience, appeared in union with intelligent animal life. "The principle or "seat of this higher life is distinguished in Scripture," Dr Lightfoot says, "from the soul, the seat of the affections "and understanding;" its seat is the spirit, the personal I, which acts by the will. Thus it is new in itself, and it gives a new force and direction to all that was best and truest in the former powers of men;—new, not by super-

seding but by transcending them, and bending all their laws into subserviency to its own higher ends. Thus it will give higher mental power; for it involves with self-command the command of attention*: it will intensify all moral affections: it intensifies reverence, worship, conscientiousness and love. And just as when moral life began, its possessors entered into new and personal relations impossible before: so he who receives this new life enters consciously into new relations; from the creature becomes the child; from the servant, the friend; from the brother man becomes the fellow member, part of the same body.

Lastly, it is new in giving a new centre or spring of action. We traced the germ of moral motive-power to that self-regard, which in the lower forms of organic life manifests itself first in the instinct to live, and then to live well; and which in the social moral life arouses us to seek the fulfilment of those relations and the satisfaction of those emotions in which our moral happiness consists. But the central motive of this new life is not self-regard, but God: love to God, the adoration and enjoyment of His perfection, the longing to have our wills conformed to His will. To love as He loves, to be perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect, is the motive that animates the eternal or divine life which Christ came to impart. Now certainly such a gift would entirely fulfil the scientific condition of

* This will doubtless be denied: it will be said, Christian thinkers do not exceed others in mental power. Christian nations do. But in the text I am speaking of what must be the results of such a life-power, when fully developed in the risen life, and therefore of its tendency now. Those who have had the privilege of intercourse with thoughtful men and women, who have had no other education than that supplied to them by true Christian life and thought, will not question its educational and refining power, even in its present, for the most part embryotic, manifestation.

continuity of developement. And remember, the theory of developement, by evolution or otherwise, must, if it is to claim any attention, be true to itself. It cannot accept the present stage as final; it must suppose the next stage will be higher than the present highest: confessedly, that is now man; and in man it is his moral life that is the highest. This spiritual life presents itself as the next stage; and therein is reasonable.

Then the promise of this new life is reasonable, as to its alleged Source. If it is to be given, we can only expect it from the same Source whence our twofold present life has come. We have no ground for asserting that the Source of all life cannot impart a higher mode of life. Reasoning from what we know to what we do not know, we must expect He can; reasoning from analogy, it appears more probable that He will.

It is a reasonable account also in the very mysteriousness of the life of which it speaks. We have seen that life itself even in its simplest manifestations is a profound mystery: no man can say what it is; we know its presence and its different kinds only by its different results. Hence we say there is one life of plants, and another of animals, and another of men. And this last we know only by living it: *we* cannot tell whence it came nor whither it goes. So it is with this new life which we are taught to call "spiritual" or "eternal;" it is only by having it and consciously living it that anyone can know the gift is given. That is the demonstration. But analogy tells us, if it were not mysterious it could be no life at all.

We must hastily pass over the reasonableness of the means by which the germ of this new life is first awakened and then nurtured. These means are mainly hope, faith,

love. Without hope the will cannot be roused to action : faith, trust in the goodness and truth of another, is the first germ of all nobleness in ourselves* : love of the highest we know, is the most purifying and elevating emotion we can have. Everyone who is employed in rescuing outcasts or street Arabs has to rely on these three means, and much in the same order in which the Gospel uses them : but the Gospel of Christ alone can use them in their highest and perfect measure.

We conclude, then, that the redemption offered us by Christ would be, if possible, a real and effectual remedy.

We come now to our third question, Is the redemption offered us in Christ a possible redemption ?

Now the common-sense answer and the scientific demonstration is, that as men have been and are being redeemed from sin and wrong-doing and the power of evil habits by the Gospel of Christ, it must be a possible redemption.

But as this result is by some attributed to other causes, it is not waste time to ask, what evidence has moral science to give us here? and this kind of evidence must be on two points: i. Does science show us in its analysis of our mental and moral constitution, any latent or potential capacity for receiving and using this higher life? and ii. Does it show us any probability of that continued life of the soul, after the body's death, in which alone this new life can be completely developed and enjoyed ?

i. Now the possibility of our receiving it is to be

* The power of faith is recognised in the Scriptures of our religion alone amongst ancient theologies. The reality and extent of its elevating power is one of the many proofs that our revelation comes from Him Who knows what is in man, which space forbids our examining now. I would refer my readers to Hare's *Victory of Faith*.

found in those latent capacities and yearnings, of which we have perhaps been made more conscious by the greatness of our wants and sufferings, but which man's natural life can never satisfy, and for which our life in this world has no use whatsoever.

We have a craving for rest: and rest we have, when every capacity of our being is satisfied, by receiving that which it is the capacity for receiving. But in our present condition, our passive capacities for receiving far transcend our active faculties for obtaining; our needs are great, our life is feeble. And even were our power equal to our needs, there is nothing in the visible or in the social world that could really satisfy us, and so give us rest. We have already evolved into beings, demanding what this present life cannot give us. And this irresistibly leads us to the conclusion, we are made for another life than this.

For there is an ideal type of Perfect in our minds which we never got from experience, but which makes us turn away unsatisfied from all that is imperfect. There is in us a capacity for adoring love, which demands an infinitely perfect object of love. There is a hunger of the soul, the result of this capacity aroused, which is like the hunger for food in the awakened bodily consciousness,—the hunger for knowledge and for fellowship in the awakened mind. Plato felt this hunger and described it in that parable of the charioteer as the hunger of the soul to behold 'That which Is.' It was this hunger that Moses felt, when he pleaded, "I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory*": This which David expressed, "Like as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, oh God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, "when shall I come and appear before God†?" And

* Exod. xxxiii. 18.

† Psalm xlii.

these longing words of David have their counterpart in the hymns which speak the Christian's experience that this hunger and thirst of the soul *is* satisfied, in beholding God in Christ, and in communion with Him.

"Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,
Thou fount of Life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn unfilled to Thee again.
We taste Thee, oh Thou living Bread,
And long to feast upon Thee still:
We drink of Thee, the fountain-head,
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill*."

For again there is in us a craving for perfect fellowship and sympathy, which no union, no sympathy with fellow-men can satisfy: it is a longing not only to know but to be known, as no human being can know us, a longing for a communion more perfect and intimate than is possible with anyone here. Our most perfect earthly unions awaken this longing, but can never satisfy it. And this longing has in all ages of thought driven men to seek for God, as a refuge from that loneliness which we feel the most perhaps when we most deeply realize our purest earthly unions, and find we cannot supply the craving our dearest ones have for strength and rest in fellowship, that they cannot supply ours, but that

"In our inmost hearts we live alone,
And all alone we die."

Thus measuring our capacities by our wants, we find here a capacity for a more complete and perfect fellowship than can subsist between us and any created being.

For there is in us a need of some Being higher than the highest man:—a Being to whom we can look up with awe and worship, and absolute trust: a Being whose com-

* From St Bernard, translated by Palmer, *Church Hymns*, S. P. C. K.

pleteness can atone to us for our incompleteness. We are made to rest on that which is higher than the highest humanity. The lords many and the gods many of the heathen bear witness to the strength of this instinct of our souls. The demand for such an object of adoration is so general as to be inexplicable, except as the human side of a relation which cries aloud for its correlative and its completion. "Lead me unto the Rock that is higher than I," is the inevitable cry of the human heart.

But now in these capacities we find there is in men a real capacity for receiving that new and higher Life which is offered in our Revelation, and of entering into its new relations.

And surely we find in them a strong confirmation of that belief in immortality which is also the nearly universal instinct of men; and without which all these capacities are absolutely needless, only serving to torment and delude us. On this point the moral sciences unguided by revelation can tell us nothing positive, but they give us so many probable grounds for believing it, as almost amount in cumulative force to a moral demonstration.

i. The capacity for progress points to unending life. For it is the individual, the person, that is capable of indefinite progress: and this capacity is personal, and goes with him when he dies. The people he leaves may be in some particulars in more favourable circumstances through his progress and example; but the habit of attention which made him a great thinker, (and which if he has lived and learnt long enough has begun to show him just a little corner of the extent of his remaining ignorance,) the habit of self-control, the developed goodness of patient enduring love, all these are parts of his personal character. He cannot bequeath them to his children, who must acquire

them, if at all, just as he did, by personal effort. He leaves as much of all this behind him, as the scholar who leaves the college well trained, leaves behind her of her education.

And then comes the question, is all this progress and capacity for progressing cut short and made useless by death? if so how useless the capacity is, and what an utter break of continuity is presented to us. Grant that in moral and healthy conditions men's lives be far prolonged; and that free from vice, excess, disease and violence, they would sink quietly to their end; yet the longer they lived, the greater would become their capacity for further moral growth and increasing wisdom; the law of habit and association secures this. And the fact that this growth belongs to the mind and spirit—to the soul and not to the organic body, establishes a radical difference between the two and points to a different destiny for each. True the moral sciences cannot prophesy with any certainty of what lies beyond that veil, but they distinctly point beyond it. And if we refuse the light of revelation on this matter, they show a regular series of sequences tending towards a purpose which they never reach, and without any reasonable end, as we have seen them to be without any intelligible beginning.

For one of the most certain facts to which our own consciousness and moral science lead us is this; there are powers and germs of capabilities within us, which never under the most favourable conditions, reach their development here, or attain their complete exercise. These are not only the receptive capacities of which we have just spoken, but all the higher faculties of men. The higher the highest mind ascends, the higher grow the heights above him, and the stronger is the sense that he could

attain them had he time and a vigour of life corresponding to his capabilities. The holier a man grows the further is his ideal holiness beyond him, and the more power he has to press towards it. The more a man does for his fellows, the stronger becomes his conviction, all that is nothing to what he longs to do and could do, if—. There is nothing of this sort with the bodily powers: they reach their full developement and cease to grow; they realize their utmost and set the man joyously on the summit of their Alps, and then they slowly fail, and the desire to exercise them ceases.

But are all these germs of the soul's capacities, all her faculties, all her strong aspirations, her strange convictions of immortality to be wasted, and crumble into dust? The Scripture answers, Not one: all these and more than all these will have their full developement and their complete employment and satisfaction in the kingdom of God and of Christ, and in carrying on the work of that kingdom amongst men. The Materialist asks us to believe they are all wasted. All the 'anticipations' of those tiny atoms have been fulfilled—all those pre-arranged 'adaptations' have accomplished their appropriate ends by at last evolving men, and placing them in a world, marvellously fitted in every respect to be their school, in no respect to be their satisfying home; men themselves, if annihilation were true, utter failures, laboriously and painfully progressing a little way, and then "going out like a candle."

It is said these agonies of effort have their reward in the benefits they secure to future men; but the chief, if not the only benefit, our highest efforts can secure to others, is to facilitate their individual progress. And what is the good of that if their progress is as vain and profitless as our own? People talk loosely of the human race as if it

had any existence apart from the individual persons who compose it, who are all, if annihilation be true, just so many bubbles. And then however high these future individuals may climb, the highest and most perfect must end with the earth; and the improved brains—whence all those higher functions of justice and goodness, of improved science and advanced society have, they tell us, sprung—will then serve only to supply as much fuel to the sun as an equivalent of undeveloped inorganic matter might have supplied.

Would such a universe be worth studying, or working for?

Perhaps we shall be told, we have only to do with the present. But then that is practically not true. It is not possible for us to act with energy in the present without a hope in the future: the present loses nearly all its value except we regard it as the cradle of the future. And if after all the toil of life we gain only annihilation, the human heart indignantly refuses to strive, and common sense confirms its refusal: "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The Comtist theory, that unselfish love for the coming generations—together with the (self-regarding) pleasure we now take in imagining our own posthumous renown,—may supply the place of the Christian's hope of eternal life and victory over all evil, is not only too poor a motive, it is self-contradictory. If progress is on the whole inevitable, it will come to future men without *our* striving: if their progress is to be cut off and ended by the body's death, it is not worth striving for. In truth if we really believed in annihilation, we ought to resist progress and strive all we can to prevent men's minds awakening. For the higher men get, the more intense is their yearning for

life*, and if by progressing they are only to become more persuaded it all ends with the grave, then the hindering men's progress, the blunting not the intensifying the agony of that hopeless yearning is the only humane object at which we care to aim. And it is a noteworthy fact, that instead of becoming happier as culture increases, apart from Christian faith and joy, men have but become more bitterly sensible of their miseries.

It was so of old: there is a sadness in Plato and in the later Greek Dramatists, of which we find no trace in Homer. And this fact has repeated itself now. In the dawning civilization of the west, our own ancestors

"Went about their gravest deeds,
Like noble boys at play."

But now our noblest statesmen and thinkers seem weighed down with sadness and strong enduring weariness. "Man's heart is wounded in these latter days," one of these teachers writes; "the general tone of feeling in our days is such, that it seems as if real gladness has well nigh died out." And this suggests two reflections: first, that if this is all progress can do for us, and there is no fruit from it beyond the grave, then surely progress is the cruellest work to which we can set ourselves. And secondly, must not that sadness, that extinction of real gladness, make all our efforts at progress vain, by making them like itself, unhealthy?

If we turn to the moral consequences of belief in annihilation, these are yet more appalling. "The denial of a future state, is the retraction of the great hope of humanity. If it became general, what an appalling

* The indifference of savage and half civilized races to death testifies to this.

“abortion, what an entombment of mind should we have*.” And so Thomas Cooper, when the disciple of Strauss, wrote to Kingsley; “I wish you could bring me to a full and “heartly reception of the Incarnation,—could lift off my “head and heart *that blasting, brutifying thought*, that the “grave must be my end all†.” The being without hope is the destruction of all morality; just as the being without gladness is the destruction of all healthy effort. There is a ghastly picture in the Luxembourg, of a revel in the dying empire of Rome, which embodies with a revolting fidelity the inevitable conclusion of those who have persuaded themselves of their own annihilation. And could the human race once be got to believe in it, the immorality that must follow from this extinction of joy and hope, would surely bring about an actual extermination.

And the fact that the doctrine of annihilation, once really believed in, must make conscience powerless and our moral constitution unworkable in the great majority of mankind, is in an orderly world of development, a very strong argument of its falsity. Every true doctrine as yet established and believed in, has hitherto had the quite contrary result: has given men more power over nature, or has enabled them to work with more efficiency on the minds and hearts of others, for their improvement. No one can possibly contend that this will be the result of men's accepting annihilation.

“The faith in a future life,” Dr Martineau writes, “has “its sheet anchor in the moral affections: they demand a “future state for the completion of righteousness, and the “harmonizing what we are, with what we ought to be.”

* Canon Mozley's *University Sermons*, 'Eternal Life.'

† *Life of C. Kingsley*.

"The scientific proof of the future state will be ours, when
 "by an actual dying we know by experience that our belief
 "in it was a true prophecy." Canon Mozley says, "The
 "present evidence we have for it"—(he is not here including
 the evidence of Revelation)—"is probable evidence, and
 "like all (scientific) probable evidence, it is an interpreta-
 "tion of facts and of marks of facts, given us by conscious-
 "ness about ourselves. i. That our bodies are not we, not
 "our proper persons. ii. That we have a moral nature,
 "subject to moral laws. The argument for the soul's im-
 "mortality is contained in the one fact, that we are our-
 "selves. I have nothing to do here with the question
 "what is my genealogy as a physical being: the fact of
 "my consciousness remains the same."

Then we must remember that the doctrine of annihilation is absolutely incapable of scientific demonstration. If it were true no human being can ever know it to be true. It may be questioned whether we are able to conceive our own annihilation: our understandings formulate the notion, but imagination refuses to take it up. The Buddhist and Comtist may speak with satisfaction of ceasing to be; but it is pretty evident they imagine themselves to be still somehow enjoying, the one the rest of Nirvana, the other the spectacle of an improving humanity, reverently worshipping himself. The Atheist is bound to assert annihilation, for the continued life of man is quite inseparable from the faith in a Personal, Moral, First Cause and Divine Author of mankind. It is only the Atheist who can legitimately question it. And the utter and revolting imbecility of man's whole moral constitution without a future life, is in complete harmony with the equal imbecility of his universe and its God, whether he call it "matter," or "force."

Still he is bound to explain whence has sprung this pertinacious and nearly universal belief in a future life and moral government, as the necessary outcome of our present life and present government in the moral world in which we find ourselves living. The death of the bodily life is the sensible and visible end ; why do we not believe it ?

"The simple senses crowned his head,
 'Omega, thou art lord' they said,
 We find no motion in the dead.
 Why if man rot in dreamless ease
 Should that plain fact, as taught by these
 Not make him sure that he shall cease?
 Who forged that other influence,
 That heat of inward evidence,
 By which he doubts against the sense?
 He owns the fatal gift of eyes
 That read his spirit, blindly wise,
 Not simple as a thing that dies."

The great and convincing evidence we have for the life beyond the grave, is that given by Revelation itself: and all the cumulative evidence for Revelation becomes evidence of this future life. But we have seen certainly so much porbable evidence for it, apart from Revelation, as makes it impossible to object, on any scientific principle of reasoning, against the truth of Christianity, on the ground of its asserting men's immortality. Probable evidence is all that we have to guide us in our present life. And remember that of two conflicting theories, the rules of scientific investigation require us to adopt that which best fits into and harmonizes all the complex facts. We say again, "The true theory proves itself, like the true "key, by fitting all the wards. That is the true theory "which reads off all the facts of the case."

Is not this the case here ? Into which of these manifold

and complex wards of human nature and life, will the Materialistic or Atheistic theories fit? They can give us no adequate reason why a moral conscience has been developed within us, compelling us to draw a distinction between right and wrong, which, according to them, is a false distinction. They can do nothing with our consciousness of responsibility, but tell us it is a lie. They can make nothing of our capacity for progress, except to tell us, it leads us to annihilation. They contradict all our instincts, set aside all our experience, deny all our hopes: they explain nothing, and find no purpose in all the delicate and intricate phenomena of our moral constitution, and its marvellous correlation to our life in this world.

The Revelation of God in Christ does fit into and "read off" all these facts and sequences. It shows us why all these innate convictions, these irrepressible longings, this capacity for endless progress have been given us. It reveals to us the true cause of all our miseries, and their effectual remedy: it explains this present life as our infancy, and this world as our training school: it offers full satisfaction to all that is highest within us now. It meets—it more than meets—that yearning for rest in complete satisfaction, that promise of continual progress, that hope of immortality which is in our inmost soul, which to doubt is helplessness, to deny is death.

LECTURE IX.

PHYSICAL AND MORAL OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

"If God truly loved man, must He not have made him such, that by want of love pain should arise? How else should He have made us capable of worthy joy, of the only happiness which, matching the dignity of man or filling his capacity, rightly deserves the name of human?"

Mystery of pain, by JAMES HINTON.

WE have been engaged hitherto in reviewing the positive evidence which human science has to offer, bearing on the various statements of our divine Revelation. Before we go on to consider the internal evidences of that Revelation, it may be as well to pause and consider what weight is to be attached to certain negative difficulties, of which some are supposed to forbid Revelation on the *à priori* ground of its being supernatural, and therefore essentially contrary to physical science: and others are moral difficulties, pressing heavily on the minds and hearts of many who cannot reconcile the facts of God's Providence as revealed in Scripture with His laws as given in conscience.

The first class are of little or no scientific importance. Inductive science has to consider facts: to begin by i. classifying all conceivable facts as either natural or supernatural; and ii. refusing to allow the latter are possible, without ascertaining if they are real, is not science now; indeed the last never was science. The classification itself was perhaps a plausible one on the

old theory of a fixed, and unchanging universe, continually evolving a certain cycle of events, and never making a new departure. In such a state of things a supernatural event might justly be regarded as a breach of the natural: although the assertion that such breaches were impossible, being the assertion of a universal negative, was never admissable. True science knows nothing of any 'impossibilities' except those which are mathematical*. And as to sensible phenomena: whilst all our knowledge is as yet a half knowledge, and even that half knowledge limited to so small a fraction of the universe and so short a portion of its duration, we cannot too rigorously keep our conclusions within the limits of the data on which they are founded....We must not presume to assert, building on a few material facts, that nothing ever can, or ever has taken place, which our limited experience has not led us to expect, or which it is inadequate to explain†.

But the truth is the only ground for this classification is gone with that old theory. The successive appearance of an inorganic Cosmos, an organic one, a world of conscious intelligence, a moral world, was at each successive stage the realization in nature, of that which before it was realized was supernatural. It was the embodiment in visible matter, of that which before it was embodied was invisible thought. Thus the objection Bishop Butler had to meet, has now been taken away by the progress of science; and there is no longer any "peculiar presumption from analogy against miraculous events, particularly against Revelation, after the settlement of a

* Which in fact are contradictions in terms. It is impossible for two parallel lines to meet, because when lines begin to meet they cease to be parallel.

† See Prof. S. Jevons, *Principles of Science*, vol. 1, preface.

CUMULATIVE EVIDENCES.

se of nature:" for to us the course of nature is not a permanent mechanical constitution confined within strict limits; but it is "a contingent historical series of progressive events, of which the only possible explanation is that very design and purpose"—the interference of which in the course of nature had been set down as supernatural, if not unnatural.

How then are we to define the supernatural now? Its whole significance depends on the particular level we intend at the moment to denote by 'nature.' That which is 'natural' to energy, was supernatural to matter. That which is 'natural' to organic life, was supernatural to the inorganic world: that which is natural to conscious sentient life, is supernatural to vegetable life. That which is natural to men, is supernatural to mere animals. And that which is natural for God to do and to be, is certainly supernatural to us.

And thus it is now, by the advance of the physical sciences, no longer possible to draw any sharp line of distinction between the natural and the supernatural: if we use the words at all, it can only be with a subjective significance, and relatively to our own understandings. Even so, we cannot define the line where the one blends into the other. The theory of developement forbids our bounding the natural by that which we are used to or expect. The law of continuity seems to demand a further developement, which, following analogy, must be brought about by the imparting a new principle or power, controlling and bending the laws of matter, of life, of human mind and will, to some new and higher purpose. It prophesies a further developement into a condition above and beyond the present state of Christless men, but it cannot tell us what, when it comes, it will be like. And though those

who saw the moral world plunged in disorder and ruin did dream of and hope for an Incarnation, yet none could have foretold what the work of the Incarnate Son should be, or what the new Creation that should proceed from His death and Resurrection.

It is impossible for us to say whether this Incarnation of the Son and the entrance of the second Adam into the visible world is more supernatural than the first Creation. It seems not to be a matter which allows of more or of less : it is wholly of God, and wholly therefore supernatural and miraculous to our level of life. And thus "a true miracle is the new manifestation of the oldest of powers : of that power which originally introduced life into a lifeless world*."

The definition of that which is natural in miracles is "design made visible, in a specific or individual event," in which the design is manifestly superhuman. The supernatural element which distinguishes the extraordinary from the ordinary manifestations of God's design, has been defined by Canon Westcott. "By a miracle we mean a phenomena which either i. in itself, or ii. from the circumstances under which it is presented, suggests the immediate working of God's personal power : because the results produced are such as cannot be included in or explained by what we observe in the ordinary course of nature†." The resurrection of Christ is the complete instance of the first : the miraculous draught of fishes of the second.

But so defining it we must remember it is only in reference to our limited experience we can affirm there is anything supernatural in such phenomena. We call those

* *The Lost Gospel.*

† *Gospel of the Resurrection*, introduction, § 17.

little fragments of God's order and working which we can discover 'ordinary and natural:' and our minds are so filled with their marvellous complexity and simplicity, we declare God never can or will do anything in His Universe which is not already through experience 'ordinary' to us: we assume that "the Divine working is exactly limited "within the few laws we have observed." The *a priori* assumption that it is not credible, because not fitting for the Divine Being, that He should at times thus set aside the ordinary operation of His laws, to produce a wonder, sign, or miracle, is as full of fallacies as of clauses. It is impossible for us to know whether in any such miraculous event the ordinary law *is* set aside at all; whether it is not merely bent and exalted to a higher office than its ordinary one. This assumption is an instance of "that "domineering argument, which under the pretext of instructing, lays down laws for God," in circumstances in which no sensible person would dream of dictating the procedure of a fellow man. The supernatural events made known to us in our Revelation need clear and adequate positive evidence to establish their credibility. But they do not come to us adversely weighted with improbability, on the ground that they are anomalous and disorderly interruptions of natural sequences. They manifest all the marks of the highest kind of order and sequence, but they are explicable not by the laws of the visible but by those of the invisible world. They are events brought about by the manifestation in this world of a Will and Purpose that is above and beyond man. That the forces of nature *can* be bent to specific and individual ends by a rational will is certain, for men do it in cases in which their will is an efficient cause of the direction of energy. To assume that a Rational Will cannot act outside the human organism, is

simply absurd*; it is contradicted by the most certain marks of the action of Intelligent Will throughout the history of the visible Cosmos.

The moral difficulties alleged against the statements of Revelation are more weighty, and demand more serious attention. They fall perhaps under three heads.

i. Those which arise from the fact that evil is permitted in this world. Why were men permitted to fall? why are they allowed to suffer? If God is Omnipotent He could have prevented it: if He were a God of love He would have prevented it: or else being all wise He would not have created beings whom He must have foreseen would sin and suffer: therefore they question God's love or His power, or wisdom.

ii. The next class are of this kind, variously stated. In the present condition of the world, the great mass of men are born in such circumstances they cannot help doing wrong, their evil conduct therefore is not really sinful and ought not to be punished. And besides these, vast numbers of innocent persons suffer for the sins of others, often much more than the guilty themselves do. They deny therefore that the world is righteously governed.

iii. The third class are those which relate to the future treatment of the impenitent.

In the first place we must remember, that for a reasonable belief in, and practical obedience to the Gospel of Christ, there is no necessity to answer these difficulties at all. And that because they are negative: they cannot destroy one iota of the positive evidence for the truth of the positive facts of our Creed; neither can they in any

* See Review of Supernatural Religion, *Church Quarterly Review*, April 1876.

way affect the actual demonstration of the promised spiritual power and deliverance from the bondage to evil, which experience gives. This positive evidence consists in facts we do know: but the difficulties are founded on our "do not know." For instance: we know that in this, and this and this instance, God's power, wisdom, and goodness are plainly manifested. Then we encounter other facts in which we cannot see them, or not all three at once. You will see the reason of this distinction. We cannot see or know a thing if it is not there to be seen and known: but it may very well be there and we not able to see it.

The whole of inductive science is built on this principle, that we can infer from what we do know, to what we do not know: but we can never disprove what we do know, by inferences based on what we do not know.

Again we must remember that as difficulties are inseparable from incomplete knowledge, to demand a solution of every difficulty in matters, a great part of which is completely beyond our experience, is unreasonable. And this is the case in all the three classes before us: because a great part, if not the whole, turns on God's ways, and on His future purposes, in conditions utterly unknown to us.

Hence the reasonable way would be to leave these difficulties alone till that future solves them; and to apply ourselves to learning more of those truths which Revelation has to teach us, and to realizing more completely in practice the blessings it offers us now.

But there are reasons of the heart which will often silence reasons of the head: and in setting aside difficulties as premature, it is needful to limit and define their extent and their importance; for that which is left vague is almost certainly left exaggerated. In doing this it is needful to distinguish between those difficulties, i. which

arise from incomplete knowledge; and those, ii. which spring from mistaken opinion: as e. g. when our mistaken inferences from the Scripture statement, are put for the actual declarations of Scripture itself. In dealing with the first it is wiser to acknowledge ignorance, than to speculate on what the answer would be, could we now discern it. In dealing with difficulties of the second class, you will have to ascertain with precision, how much of the statement objected to is plainly taught in Scripture; how much of it is added in the way of inference by men. Very often you will find that whilst the positive fact is stated plainly in Scripture, its negative completion is a human addition*.

And then as to the disposition with which these difficulties should be faced: it is clear from the contemptuous manner in which they are urged by professed unbelievers, and the despairing manner in which they are spoken of by many doubters, that they enter on the enquiry firmly convinced there can be no answer, and sometimes almost determined there shall be none. I do not mean that this is dishonest; but both dispositions are fatal to their receiving the answer, if there is one. Why then ought we to expect beforehand there is any answer to be found?

Because it is of the nature of light to dispel darkness and of increasing knowledge to solve the difficulties of remaining ignorance. In this as in all enquiries we have no way of learning, but by arguing from what we do know,

* E.g. That all the elect shall be saved is plainly taught, as in John vi. 37—40; x. 27—29. That all who are not among the elect shall be finally lost, is the human completion. See Rev. xx. 12, 13; 1 Timothy iv. 10. In Rev. xiv. 4 the elect saints are spoken of as the firstfruits of the Lamb's great harvest; what, if this completion is true, will the harvest itself consist of?

to what we do not know. So far as we do know, the probabilities are all on the side of the goodness, wisdom and power of the great First Cause. All the processes of nature, all the relations we know, tend on the whole to beneficent ends, and show no limitation whatever of power or of skill. And therefore the just inference of inductive science is, that those processes the ends of which we do not yet know will show when comprehended the same characteristics. So far as we are able to test the great affirmations of Revelation by human science, those affirmations are sustained: the scientific inference is that Revelation will probably prove true when it tells us things which we cannot yet test.

Again when these difficulties are used as objections to specific truths of Revelation, they must be considered in the sense in which the Scriptures state them, otherwise the objection is utterly futile. For example; it is not enough for the objector to show that assuming the fall without the Redemption; or assuming our annihilation in death, the whole moral government of the world is inhumane, and the suffering of the world is purposeless. That argument does not touch Revelation at all, or rather it makes strongly for its probability. What he has to show is, that on the assumption that the Redemption of the world is an accomplished fact, and Salvation one that is being accomplished; that this life is God's school for man's true life; that God is overruling it all, is undoing our sin, and raising us to holiness and happiness—that assuming all this, still the suffering and misery in the present world is needless and therefore inhumane.

Once more, it is necessary to take these objections one by one, and consider the answer of the first before we trouble ourselves with the second or the third. This is

so obvious it would seem idle again to mention it*, but that I have never yet met with any one really troubled by these difficulties, who did not adopt this want of method in dealing with them.

The first class of difficulties relate to the presence of evil in the world.

If God were Omnipotent, He could have prevented all evil. If, being Omnipotent, He were also benevolent, He would have prevented it. Or being Allwise and foreseeing the results, He would not have created beings who have to sin and suffer.

In weighing this difficulty, you will have to separate that part which arises from our not knowing from that which is due to our mistaken opinions. These last are to be looked for in the first instance, as usual, in our words.

What do we mean by evil? and what does the Scripture mean by God's All Power?

Evil is of three kinds; pain or physical suffering and death; sorrow, or emotional suffering; and moral evil, or wickedness. Thus we include under one name, sin which is the true evil—purely evil: and the punishment of sin, which being its check and its remedy is the only mercy the persistent sinner can receive. There is, however, this broad distinction between suffering and sin; sin has in its own nature no end but itself and its own increase: suffering is never in this world an end in itself, it is the means to an end. And it is impossible to judge of the moral character of any means without reference to the object it is intended to accomplish; the wisdom and goodness of the means employed, are always relative to the end. The Bashi Bazouk mutilating a child for the joy of hearing its cries; and the Christian surgeon mutilating a child in

* See Lecture I. page 13.

order to save it from life-long agony, are both using precisely the same means; it is the difference of their ends alone that makes the one a devilish and the other a God-like deed. To judge then whether the sufferings we witness are wise and loving, or needless and cruel, we must know for what ends God is permitting them. Now there is no doubt that we are very ignorant of a great many of the conditions under which God's moral Cosmos is developing, and are almost wholly ignorant of the consummation to which the whole is tending*. What we see going on are parts of processes, evidently organised,—evidently therefore means to some end, which we do not see fully, if at all. Thus neither knowing all the conditions, the whole process, nor the end; how can we judge whether the means employed are necessary or not?

We can only argue from those cases which we can examine; we must judge from analogy that the same moral cause will cause effects of the same moral character; and we must judge from experience. The physiologist will tell you that pain is a beneficial means, warning us against incurring injuries that would be fatal to life, or compelling rest when activity would be dangerous. The philosopher will tell you, that death being in a finite world a necessary condition of the multiplication and reproduction of life, it is a means for multiplying happiness. The moralist knows that sorrow is often the means of fitting men for higher satisfaction and more worthy joys. Revelation speaks the same fact, with how far clearer and nobler utterance, when it tells us that "It became Him for Whom, "and by Whom all things are, in bringing many sons

* I believe the only declaration in Scripture which clearly bears on this consummation is that in 1 Cor. xv. 24—28, which speaks of the final victory over and abolition of all enemies, "the last being death."

"unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering."

In judging then as to what the intention of the Creator is, from that mixed state of things which results from so much pain and loss, amongst so great an amount of ease and happiness; there is no sounder rule than Paley gives us. He says "we must regard those effects alone which "are accompanied with the marks of intention."

Now this rule excludes a very great amount of suffering from the question whether God is love, desiring our real happiness. It wholly excludes the only true evil, sin: for our Revelation plainly tells us sin came into this world against the command of God; and that He is manifesting Himself to us in Christ as the destroyer of sin and all the fruits of sin.

Again how much of our unhappiness comes from our anxieties and fears. Why is life so weary, full of care for our own future and that of others? why but because we will not do as our Father bids us and leave all the future to His providing, casting all our cares on Him, and all our fears. We *will* take the burden of the future on ourselves; and so when the trouble we have dreaded comes, it crushes us, because the strength we should have had to bear it, has been worn out in dreading it: whilst if it never comes at all, we have already suffered, several times over, as much as if it had come. Now this is our side of the matter: but what is God's side? He bids us not to take it: if we will take it, how is He to teach us better? how but by letting us learn by experience, how painful and how useless our disobedience and faithlessness is?

How large a portion of the misery of the world arises from our morbid and exaggerated horror of death: and yet it is our own, utterly unreasonable, want of faith that

makes up half the sorrow, and all the horror of death. Again this misery is not God's doing, it is our own. In His Revelation He has given us the remedy for this fear of death, has pressed it upon us with the most loving urgency.

In all these cases the wisdom of the means used depends on the end that has to be accomplished, and here we only see a part of the end: but in raising men to the highest happiness they can reach, it seems essential they should learn to trust and that absolutely. And as far as our experience can help us, this is reasonable. We find practically, that this faith in goodness and truth is the first step to all nobleness. Before a philanthropist can raise a street Arab, he must get the boy's confidence. How is God to teach us to trust Him? He has given us the elements of faith, and He bids us exercise it, trusting Him as a child does its father. If we obey, we learn more faith by our experience of its restful happiness: if we disobey, He teaches us by letting us experience the suffering that want of trust brings.

Paley's argument as to the benevolence of the Creator is this. When we cannot reconcile all these effects with benevolence of design, we must make the few give place to the many. When God created the sentient creatures and man, either He wished their happiness, or their misery, or He was indifferent and unconcerned about it. "If He wished their misery, He might have made sure of it by forming their senses to be as many pains to them, as they are gratifications; or by placing them in the midst of objects so ill-suited to them as to have offended, instead of ministering as they do to their delight. Had He been indifferent, we must impute to good fortune alone both our capacities for receiving pleasure, and the vast supply

"of external objects fitted to produce it. But either of these being too great to attribute to accident, nothing remains but the first supposition, that when God created man and all the creatures, He designed their happiness and made the provision He has made, for that purpose."

Here the pessimists come in and say the evil in the world far exceeds the good, and its suffering its happiness. It is now one of the luxuries of fashionable art to indulge in these exaggerations of sadness, and we must therefore be on our guard against morbid sentiment here. From various causes, and really one of the chief is the amount of exertions now made to alleviate suffering,—exertions due to the influence of Christ's example, and in themselves unmixed good,—we have got to think of the suffering and pain so exclusively, we lose sight of the pleasures, the ease and happiness of life; these are such a matter of course they do not excite our interest. We are on the look-out for suffering and so we see it; we are excited by it, and so we exaggerate it: we forget how great an amount of real happiness is compatible with pain and sorrow. "How terrible it must be," some one said to me the other day, "to work in that hospital for incurable children—the very thought of children incurable is so sad, so unnatural*." So it is, and does not that show how exceptional it is? Besides, if instead of indulging this sadness you go and work there, you will I am told find a merrier set of children in it than in any ordinary national school.

With respect to the sentient creatures, there can be no real question to any healthy mind, as to the vast preponderance of their happiness. Go out with Paley into the

* Shortly after this was written, the hospital in question had to change its name, *so many of its inmates were cured*. It is now our "hospital for sick children."

open country, listen to the birds, watch the flocks, see the myriads of happy creatures which crowd on your view in the air alone, "their sportive motions, their wanton mazes, "their gratuitous activity, all testifying their joy and exultation:" think how these clouds of happiness cover the surface of the earth,—and try to think it miserable if you can. This is how a modern-thought writer has tried to accomplish that miraculous feat: seeing these myriads of exulting creatures and wanting to tone down the evident fact to the conventional level of woe, he writes "How hapless "their lot! the chill of night will end their dance, summed at every change of the atmosphere *to face all the "solemnities of eternity!"*

Paley goes on to show that even of fallen man it is still true, that ease and happiness are the rule, and suffering the exception. "The preponderancy of health and ease "over pain and distress is evinced," he says, "by the very "notice which calamities excite: what inquiries does the "sickness of our friends produce, what conversation their "calamities! this shows the common course of things is in "favour of happiness. One great cause of our insensibility "to the goodness of the Creator is the very extensiveness "of His bounty. When we hear of blessings, we think of "uncommon gifts and exceptional happiness. But the "common benefits which entirely escape us are the great "things, alone so to speak worthy of the care of Providence. "Nightly rest and daily bread, the ordinary use of our "limbs, our senses and understanding,—these are gifts so "important as to admit of no comparison with any other. "And a blessing ought to be more satisfactory because of "its commonness; but our selfishness perverts our judgment."

The same argument holds good, in a measure, of the

prevalence of the true evil. That there is a sickening amount of depravity and wickedness in the world is unquestionably true. That still "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" is too certain. It is equally true, that if evil and cruelty were universal, or even as usual as kindness, truth and just dealing, we should not be sickened by it*. It is obvious that what we generally meet with is kindness, a general though inexact veracity, and justice; for this is what men evidently expect to find; and their expectation must be the fruit of experience, though doubtless it has its roots in something much deeper. The evil deeds attract the most attention and set us talking the most, because they are the exceptions. And why are they so? because of the strong influences set by God in this world, and in human hearts and human governments, restraining evil and educating men to love and justice and self-control: of which the chief is the influence of Christ.

We must bear in mind then, it is, despite the fall, a

* Here also it is often true we find what we look for. Wordsworth did, when he wrote,

"They speak of men's ingratitude,

"Kind deeds with deeds, unkind returning:

"Alas the gratitude of man hath oftener left me mourning."

Theologians of one school "having placed the state to which the "Gospel is designed to raise us far too low, are obliged, in order to "preserve the difference which the Scriptures make between the natural "and the Christian state, to represent the natural state of man far lower "than it really is: and are led to conclusions contrary to all common "sense, speaking of the babe in the cradle as possessing in itself all the "elements of a devil: and applying to man even in his state of childhood "those descriptions which the Bible gives of men when they have wilfully "run into the greatest lengths of corruption." These exaggerations of man's depravity are examples of human inference from Scripture being put in place of the actual Word. *Records of the Ministry*, p. 313, Rev. E. T. M. Phillipps.

mixed world we live in, and the evils we have to contend against are not the fearfully preponderating things which some would have us believe. And that they are not so, because God is visibly restraining them both by grace and by punishments.

But how can we reconcile the presence of evil at all, or in any degree, with the Omnipotence of a loving God ?

The complete answer to this is obviously out of our reach: we cannot tell what Infinite Love will do,—in working out purposes of many of which we know nothing whatever,—when it is guided by Infinite Wisdom. But there are false opinions of men about these Attributes of God, which may be cleared away, in part at least. The very division of God's completeness and Majesty, into distinct attributes, is an opinion forced upon us by the limitations of our understandings: if we are to think of God at all, we must think of Him as manifested to us, in His works and words, first on one side, then on another: and we say, Here is the mark of God's love; there we see the footsteps of His justice; in this fulfilment of His promise we see His truth; in that, His wisdom, compassion or power. And this leads us to imagine there may be that conflict between the one and the other attribute, of which we are conscious in ourselves, because in us these principles are so feeble, and their right application so uncertain. But God is One, and His Immensity is One. His Love is boundless and eternal because it is the love of Omniscient Justice: His Justice must be inexorable because it is boundless Love. His wrath against sin is fearful, and must be unending, because it is "the wrath of the Lamb"—the wrath of unfailing Compassion.

What does the Scripture mean by God being Almighty? That He has the power to do and cause to be done all

that He wills: and what He wills is determined by His truth, justice, wisdom and love. Now a moral Omnipotence directed by Absolute Truth can never effect contradictions. Cudworth demonstrated this long ago, yet the objectors go on demanding, "If God be Omnipotent let Him show it by making moral contradictions true." But the Scriptures tell us boldly and without any qualification, on the one side that God is Almighty, on the other that there are things God cannot do: "He cannot deny Himself." "It is impossible for God to lie." "Thus when we speak of God's Omnipotence we do not mean He can simply and nakedly do anything that can be stated in words: the language we use is imposed on us by our ignorance*." If we were omnipotent this is what we could do; we could make contradictions coincide,—and so create a hideous moral chaos: we could make half our work give the lie to the other half and so turn it all into evil. Yet still we know that self-contradiction is a mark of ignorance and imperfect will, not possible to Infinite wisdom and truth.

Now the objection we are considering appears to involve several contradictions. It asserts that if God were Omnipotent and Benevolent, He would have made all His creatures perfect at once. But a creature must of necessity be finite: an infinite creature is a contradiction in terms. A finite creature cannot be absolutely perfect; for as none of its capacities or faculties are infinite, when it has reached their full perfection it is still infinitely removed from God's perfection. It may be relatively perfect, if it has no desire beyond those limits, but then it has no hope of progress and no ideal of God. It seems that this is enough for the happiness of the non-reasoning creatures.

* Canon Mozley.

For us God has chosen the higher happiness of unending progress. To enjoy this we must have an Ideal, we must long to approach it; we must have dissatisfaction and pain when we are not approaching it.

Again this objection demands that by virtue of God's Omnipotence, He should create moral beings absolutely incapable of doing wrong: and that is a contradiction. For you will remember our highest happiness consists in the fulfilment of our moral relations: and the essence of moral relations and therefore of moral satisfaction is that we freely consent to and choose their fulfilment. To be moral beings and to have this highest happiness we must be free to choose, and therefore free to refuse, free to fulfil or not to fulfil the moral relation. Otherwise the affection is not moral but mechanical: the joy consists in the freedom; and the possession of freedom to choose the best and the highest, is inseparable from the power of choosing wrongly. If you take firm hold of this truth the difficulty vanishes: for to say, that if God were at once all powerful, benevolent and wise, He would have made all His creatures incapable of falling, is to say He would have made no moral creatures at all: that is He would never have imparted to other beings any of His own perfection, nor made any in His own likeness.

This goes on the assumption, which Stuart Mill (who chiefly urged it) invariably took for granted; that if God were all wise and all good, He would certainly act as Mill himself, with his partial knowledge and limited wisdom, would have acted had he the same power. You will have little difficulty I imagine in concluding that the parallel leads to a non-sequitur. Our judgement of what it is wise and good to do, varies with our knowledge. We find out all the conditions and circumstances we can, judge and act

accordingly: if we knew all, we should almost certainly judge and therefore act in some respects differently. That God has not chosen for men, nor dealt with them, as we should had we His power without His wisdom and foresight, not only does not prove He is less benevolent than we are, but it necessarily follows from the fact of God's perfect knowledge, wisdom and love, that "His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts."

Here perhaps I ought to name another objection of Mill's. He says the use of means is inconsistent with Omnipotence. We use means because we cannot accomplish our ends by simply willing them. We use machines because we cannot cause cloth to be made by a wish: we use cloth because we cannot make ourselves warm by simply choosing warmth. If we were omnipotent we should need no means, and should therefore use none. Hence if God were Omnipotent He would never use any means, but all would be done by miracle.

Consider then what sort of world we should be in, if creation had been completed and made perfect at once without 'means.' *There would be nothing for us to do; for if God used no means, we could use none. There would be nothing for us to know; for all our knowledge consists in tracing out the processes by which results are brought about. There would be no revelation in creation to us, for no moral qualities can be displayed to minds such as ours without processes. Such a universe would not have discovered to us God's wisdom: His wonderful patience would be wholly unknown: there would be no relations to be sought out and felt by us, for these also are means; and therefore His justice would have nothing to

* See above, Lecture v. p. 128.

do. To finite minds like ours, God and His glory would be unrevealed.

This use of God's absolute power is therefore forbidden by His love: and now God so does His works of creation that we can learn from them, and delight in the wisdom with which they are constructed. He so does His work of sustaining, governing, raising us, that we can see and copy His modes of working, and little by little become morally fellow-workers with God in freely communicating to others what we receive out of His fulness; teaching and raising others as He teaches and raises us. And in the same way with the spiritual work of sanctifying men in the likeness of Christ. God carries on this work by means, that His people may learn from it and copy it, by bringing love and purity to bear on others, as Christ's love and holiness has been brought to bear on them, and so be trained to become themselves channels of His grace to others.

To say then that if God were Omnipotent He would use no means; is to say that Omnipotence is inconsistent with His imparting any of His own wisdom, love and holiness to finite creatures. It is to say that if God were Omnipotent, He must needs be as impatient as we are. Yet patience and long-suffering are not signs of weakness even amongst ourselves: and if the Infinite God is pleased to communicate thus with His finite creatures, must He not be infinitely patient with them*?

And so we come to the second class of difficulties, which lie both against the ways of Providence, and the doings of God as told us in the Scriptures: it is alleged that multitudes are so placed in this world that they cannot help sinning, and therefore ought not to be punished:

* See Isaiah lvii. 15, 16; Rom. xv. 5; Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; 2 Pet. iii. 9, 15.

that innocent persons suffer for the sins of others, as much, often more than the offenders. It is the old charge, that the ways of the Lord are 'not equal.'

The question here then is of the relation established between sin and suffering, and of the moral use of sorrow and pain. If we fairly grasp the truth, that sin is the only true evil, the one misery, the living death ; which by the law of our nature* must grow worse the longer it is indulged in,—worse in the individual and in the society ;—then whatever checks this evil and hinders its growth, will be seen to be the truest mercy. And because God is Love, we may be sure *this* is what He will maintain,—constant punishment for continuous sin. There is no moral difficulty in this. It is because God willeth not the death of the sinner, that He always punishes sin, until the will repenting turns back from evil, and desiring to obey, escapes from death and lives. And even if we receive the doctrine that after death there can be no such effectual repentance as this ; yet whilst there can be growth in evil, it is a mercy that growth should be checked. Or is it demanded that God shall show His love in the next world, by enabling men to be selfish without loss, traitors without shame, false without contempt, murderers without remorse ?

That many are so placed in this world they cannot but sin, and therefore ought not to be punished, proceeds on two false assumptions. First, that evil done involuntarily or in entire ignorance is sin ; and secondly, that God punishes it as if it were sin. The Scriptures expressly affirm that God's judgement determines the guilt, innocence, and righteousness of each one, by that rule of right which each

* See above, Lecture VIII. p. 206, *Law of habit*.

knows, and breaks or obeys, and not by any higher or lower law*.

But it is said the innocent and wicked are constantly in the Old Testament involved in the same punishment; men, women and children given up to the same indiscriminate slaughter.

But is death the same punishment to all? Here for one example we are told of a race that has become so vile, it can hand down only a vile and polluted life to its coming generations: we are told of a corruption so great, that they cannot but be thoroughly immoral themselves, and degraders of the tribes near them†. There is a new hypothesis,—some will tell you a new science,—called ‘heredity;’ which explains why such vices as those in which the Canaanitish races were steeped, are handed down to generation after generation in tainted health and diseased appetites. Whether the explanation prove true or not; about the general fact of such transmission there is no question. How then is such a race and its unborn generations to be delivered? By death: they must not grow up to be corrupt and propagators of corruption amongst mankind. These children must not live on earth, under conditions which would make moral life unattainable for them. Remembering that moral evil, or the being contrary to God’s Holiness, is the only true misery, it will appear highly probable, that the removal of all these hosts from a world where their progress *must* have been to evil, to a world where progress in evil might be checked, and where temptation and opportunities for the indulgence of depraved appetites must be wanting, was the greatest, if

* Romans ii.; Luke xii. 47, 48.

† Genesis xv. 16, still a possibility of improvement; Lev. xviii. 25—30; Deut. ix. 4, 5; xviii. 9—12, become impossible.

not the only mercy they were capable of receiving then. This class of difficulties arises from the false estimate we make of good and evil. We count the body's death the greatest of evils, and indulgence in wickedness of comparatively little consequence. God sees differently, and He, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, chooses for us all what is best.

And so He often chooses for the innocent child, and for those who are striving to follow Him—quite as often as for those who are refusing to obey Him,—sorrow, pain and death. Consider what sorrow is caused by—some broken or interrupted relation. But it seems that if we are to have any genuine joy in fulfilled relations, we must have sorrow when they cease; if no other, then sorrow for the loss of that which was our joy,—for the breach of that most dear custom of living together. We cry to stay here and to have our dear ones stay. But our Father has a higher school and other work than this world affords, and He will not sacrifice their good to our misjudging affection, nor our growth to our self-indulgence. We spoil our own pleasure and cry aloud it is cruel that all things are not still made pleasant to us. “But this confused world of good and evil, is the right arena and true training school for battle, enterprise, and patience, for all the active and indeed all the passive virtues. The baseness, stupidity, folly, injustice, suffering and wreck of the world, are a splendid challenge to strength, diligence, endurance, faith, wisdom, to all sublime and manly qualities.*”

Part of these difficulties arise also from our not comprehending the nature of the happiness God is preparing for us. In preparing us for it, the Holy Spirit says that “Patience must have her perfect work in us, that we may

* *Pessimism and its Antidote.*

"be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." "No," we answer, "we cannot endure to see patience so tried in those "we love, by such sufferings: *we* do not see what good it "can do,—and so we *know* it is needless."

But what if patience, endurance, submission, faith and obedience, are not only essential as lessons we must learn in order to be fit for the kingdom of Heaven; but are also themselves parts of the true heaven, parts of the heavenly joy? What if the joy of Heaven is nothing else than the being more and yet more what Christ is; what if it be to share in the self-sacrificing work of His kingdom,—to be made true Kings and Priests unto God and for men? Is it not self-evident, that to share such happiness as that, we must be patient as God is patient? What if without these lessons fully learnt and these habits completely formed in us, it would be mere torture to be called to that height of self-sacrifice, for the evil and unthankful as well as for the good, which is necessarily included in being 'like Christ'? What if, until we are made perfect through suffering, rooted in faith, patience and love, we are incapable of feeling that joy of self-sacrifice and self-abnegation which is at once the work and the happiness of the true King and Priest? What if, till then, we are incapable of receiving that fulness of spiritual life, which will turn what is now mere suffering and shame, into joy unspeakable and full of glory?

This then being the happiness which our Father chooses for us, the needful schooling is painful because we are fallen. It requires effort, and we are weak: it demands self-control, and we are self-indulgent. It requires us to live for God in Christ, and we would so willingly live for ourselves. And often we would willingly give up the blessedness to be let off the education. But because our

Father is loving and wise, He chooses for us, giving us the conflict with its suffering, its consolations, and its victory; instead of that quiescence in evil which is defeat and death.

The last class of difficulties are those which relate to God's future dealings with the impenitent.

Now in considering these, it is obvious we can form no real judgement on the matter, unless we know i. what they will be; and ii. what they ought to be: nor can any difficulty arise here, until we have distinct information on both these points, and then find that the second disagrees with the first.

Of the first we can clearly know nothing apart from God's own revelation. All that the Scriptures tell us on this matter we accept as the facts: but these statements are few in number, contained in scattered and often isolated texts, mostly expressed in parables or in what is evidently figurative language, and, in general, obviously and designedly incomplete. Now in collating and comparing these, divines have done, what scientific men are always doing with their facts—completed them by hypotheses and theories of their own: and then like too many professors of other sciences, they have taught these inferences and opinions of their own, as an actual part of the Divine statement. And it is the various human opinions that have thus clustered around the inspired sayings, which have caused a great, perhaps the greatest part of these difficulties; we have been so used to receive one or other of them as a part of revealed truth, that it is now not less difficult than necessary to distinguish between the two. And it is to be wished that our Teachers would more generally use the precaution Rudolph Virchow* urges

* *Freedom of Science in the State.*

on the teachers of human science; and "putting forth first "what is actually known" by being explicitly stated in Scripture, "and then if they make inferences or theories, "always say, 'Observe, this is not proved, it is my opinion, "'my theory.'"

Not less valuable for yourselves, in considering such opinions or interpretations of Scripture, would be the application of Sir John Herschel's rule*. Those passages of Scripture, which according to your own received opinion, ought not to say what they do say, are just those that should be kept ever present in your minds; as belonging to the class of passages which serve as guides to further growth in knowledge. It is not enough that certain passages seem distinctly to support that opinion, whilst not expressly stating it in a completed proposition, until we have ascertained the opinion is supported by every passage which bears on the subject, and is in harmony with the whole tenor of Revelation.

As examples of such opinions I would name that which affirms that all possibility of repentance is ended by the death of the body: that the moment before death repentance was still possible to the worst and most hardened of sinners: that the moment after death,—incurred it may be in obedience to duty or in generous self-sacrifice,—repentance and the longing to do God's will are for ever impossible even to the quite unhardened offender.

Moral science evidently can give us no light here: science knows nothing of what can or cannot be under new conditions of which we have and can have no experience in

* "These are the facts which according to received theories ought not "to happen: and which should therefore be kept ever present in our "minds as belonging to the class of facts which serve as a clue to fresh "discoveries."

this life. But moral probability is against it: it seems to assume that repentance—that is the renouncing of sin and turning back to God—is so far a physical function that it is impossible to a spirit that has been disembodied in death; whereas we know it is a spiritual action. Scripture nowhere asserts it*: “it indeed nowhere asserts or “implies that repentance and renewal to holiness are possible after death to those who have thrown away the “opportunities given them of seeking them in this life†.” All that analogy can tell us seems to be, that they who have lost the opportunity and time for education, cannot afterwards gain it. And—as the being made like Christ is the salvation ordained for us—if nothing whatever of the mind of Christ is formed in us in this world, where we are taught He was made perfect through suffering, we cannot tell that it ever will be formed in us: all we know is that now is the day of this salvation.

The opinion which chiefly creates this difficulty, is that which affirms that the punishment of the wicked is unending. This also contains two statements: i. the positive fact that the wicked are punished, plainly taught in Scripture: ii. the negative completion of that fact, that punishment will never in any measure aid their recovery, and will never therefore end; which cannot be so plainly taught in Scripture, because there is a difference of opinion amongst the teachers of the church upon it. Now this is a question on which moral science can give no light at all. We have seen what is the inevitable conclusion of that law of habit which determines the limit of our natural ca-

* The passage on which it is built, in Eccles. xi. 3, has in the connection in which it stands no obvious relation to this subject: verse 5 is more pertinent to it, as a warning not to be wise above what is written.

† *The Christian Hope.*

capacity for moral growth*. But what may be possible under the new and spiritual power of Christ's kingdom, is as much beyond the ken of moral science, as the capacities of a growing plant are beyond calculation by the laws of dynamics. The question turns entirely on the meaning and right interpretation of certain passages of Scripture; and it does not properly come into our question at all. It is not our business now, it certainly never can be mine, to decide on the right translation and true import of individual passages of Scripture. I do not know whether the distinction is clear to you. There is no difference of opinion in the churches, as to those great foundations of our Christian faith, the evidences for which we have been examining: that is, of our real condition now, and of what God has done and is doing for our deliverance. These things do not turn on the exact meaning of isolated passages; they are revealed to us in facts,—facts of personal experience and of human history,—they are revealed to us in the prophecies and types of the Old Testament, in the life and mind and works of Christ, recorded in the New. Into these facts we both may and are bound to search, that we may hopefully yield ourselves up to God's work for us, and willingly do His will.

But the question what God will do ages hence, with men under entirely different conditions, conditions of existence not yet experienced, and therefore not only unknown but unimaginable; this is a question which it does not the least concern us to know, and on which we can have neither external nor internal evidence by which to judge, either what God will do, or what He ought to do. The conditions of moral existence in those future æons are unknown, and probably incommunicable: for we have no

* Lecture VIII., page 206.

experience either of what it is to be without a material body, or of what it will be to live in the resurrection or spiritual body. Of the conditions of the new Heavens and new Earth, which follow the second resurrection, we know nothing: of the effect of these new conditions on moral beings, we cannot even imagine. But the one condition which in all these changes remains unchangeable is God's Holiness, Righteousness, and Love: and that Unchangeableness is enough—more than enough—for us to rest in. How God will deal with His rebellious creatures in their new conditions, it is impossible for us to imagine, because we can form no opinion at all as to what treatment will be the best for them.

But it seems men are rejecting the whole Revelation of God in Christ, and refusing to consent to His sanctifying work in themselves, because "they will have nothing to do with a God, as long as He is one who sends the many to Tartarus, the few to heaven." In other words they are rejecting His love and resisting His will now, although they see it to be now good, holy, and loving; because they think, or some other people say, that in ages to come He will be doing something, which to their present judgement will not be loving, good or holy. Instead that is of reasoning from what they do know to what they do not know, they insist on reasoning from what they do not and cannot know, to what they do or might know. And they call this folly rational and moral although it is in a matter of the highest importance, on a question which dominates the whole course of their lives, and which, on their own premises, is of endless importance not only to themselves but to all they influence.

But it will be said our ignorance is not absolute. There are positive statements made in the Scripture con-

cerning the future state of the wicked, of which some are morally incredible, and some are irreconcilable. The question then what the Scriptures teach, turns on the exact meaning and extent of these statements. It is impossible to determine either, on any rational principle of criticism, until we have ascertained

i. what is the sense of the original words used to express the duration and the nature of this punishment, as gathered from a careful comparison of *all* the passages in which those words are used* ;

ii. in what sense the words were used by the speaker or writer in each case ;

iii. what meaning they would convey to the hearers, on the actual spot where they were spoken.

And then all the statements of Scripture that bear, directly or indirectly or by allusion, on this subject, thus accurately ascertained and rightly interpreted, must be brought together, compared, weighed, giving to each its proportionate force ; so that from the whole we may judge what and how much has been revealed concerning the final condition of the impenitent. And surely the very statement of the process needed,—which is nothing more than is required to determine the exact meaning of a disputed passage in Plato, or of an ancient term in our own

* If the Greek word *αἰώνιος* were uniformly equivalent to the English 'eternal,' there would be little question as to most of these passages. But it is not. "*Αἰώνιος* is not equal to 'eternal' in Romans xvi. 25 ; and "it comes to an end in Heb. ix. 26." (See Revised Version.) Thus it would seem that '*αἰώνιος*' is not so much meant to convey to us the simple algebraic notion of 'unending time,' as to open to us in perspective a long vista down succeeding epochs or ages ; each doubtless a further Revelation of God to His creatures, each epoch created by His power and directed by His will, and coming to an end in His time, when the new one is at hand.

law-books,—I say the mere statement is enough to show that the conclusion come to is only approximately true.

You will find most of these passages collected in Canon Farrar's *Eternal Hope*. He complains bitterly of the error of insisting on the literal truth of individual passages, and of insisting too much on their absolute truth. There is no doubt such a danger, if you emphasize some figurative texts and neglect others. But I do not think you will ever find any satisfaction in the opposite course, of weakening the force of Scripture words and trying to make out they mean less than they seem to mean. I believe most of this class of difficulties would be done away with, if we could bring ourselves to accept all these passages, as not only true in a sense, but as absolutely and transcendently true; true now, true in all past time, true for ever: and to emphasize, if any, then those which on our own view ought not to say what they actually do say. These passages would fall, thus taken, into three classes. Those which speak of the final judgement, and separation, as Matt. xxv. 31—46; Rev. xx. 11—13, 15. Those which speak of the end of death itself, as Rev. xx. 14; xxi. 4; 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26*. Those which speak of the restitution of all things, as in Acts iii. 21; Heb. ii. 8; and so often in the prophets.

So taken they will appear irreconcilable. Well, the apparent irreconcilableness of these different statements in Scripture, is a phenomenon we constantly meet with in science. Two sides of some great fact continually appear to us contradictory because we are without the whole fact, the further truth, which if known would harmonize them†.

* 'Eternal death' is a term never used in Scripture; only the 'second death.'

† See for one instance of this, Lecture v., p. 132.

What then do the opposing sciences do? deny each other's facts? never. Their students continue to investigate both sets of facts, and suspend their judgement as to the point of reconciliation. So surely divines should do here.

And this is what our church has done. The two creeds in which she authoritatively bids her laity confess the faith teach us to "believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting,"—"the life of the world to come": nothing is said of eternal death. "The confession of our Christian faith commonly called the creed of St Athanasius" has not the authority of a creed set forth by a General Council; it is a hymn. And as we receive it on our own church's authority we must receive it in our church's sense. Now the deliberate removal of the forty-second Article of faith cannot honestly be taken as anything short of a deliberate refusal to decide this question. That Article as framed in 1552 was as follows. Its title was, "That all men shall not be saved, at the length." "They also are worthy of condemnation, who endeavour at this time to restore the dangerous opinion, that all men, be they never so ungodly, shall at length be saved, when they have suffered pains for their sins, a certain time, appointed by God's justice." It was deliberately removed ten years later: the Reformers, led by Archbishop Parker, refused, in conformity with the sixth Article, to pronounce judgement on this matter.

If, turning from the authoritative voice of our church, you seek among her foremost teachers, you will meet with that difference of opinion which leaves us practically without any certain decision. You will find a summary of these opinions in the last chapter of Canon Farrar's work on *Eternal Hope*; and in a very valuable letter from Prof. Plumptre in the appendix. And again the only con-

clusion you can come to is, that the eternal duration of punishment is a matter we cannot decide because it is not revealed.

There is another way of learning to understand God's word than these two. It is by asking for and hearkening to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, guiding us into all truth. But it is surely not necessary to show, that on this question we cannot dare to ask for the Spirit's teaching. That Divine Teacher leads the humble believer to the perception of those truths, which are at the time profitable for his sanctification or needful for the present guidance of his steps. We know what His answer is to questions of curiosity: "What is that to thee? follow thou Me."

But here we must take heed to the exact limits of the question which is thus left unrevealed. We have seen that the misery of the wicked,—which we call their punishment,—is the wickedness itself. As long as men go on consciously, or wilfully, or willingly resisting God's will, so long they will be miserable, because that resistance is their misery. "It is an awful thing to think that this "feeble individuality of ours, the offspring of God's Person-ality, should have some power, and even more will than "power, to close its door against Him and keep house "without Him*." But our own conscious experience tells us, this is what we can do.

"As long as a man can believe that hell is the punishment of sin, arbitrarily fixed by God's justice, he hopes to "be let off and forgiven of God somehow. But the end "and the wages of sin—not the punishment—is death. "Every time a man sins he is earning those wages, travelling to that end. Your sins are killing you by inches. "Every sin you commit with your body shortens your

* *Thomas Wingfold, Curate.*

"bodily life: every sin you commit with your mind, every
 "act of folly, stupidity, wilful ignorance, helps to destroy
 "your mind; and leaves you dull, silly, devoid of right
 "reason. Every sin you commit with your spirit—each
 "sin of passion and temper, envy and malice, pride and
 "vanity, extravagance and selfishness—helps to destroy
 "your spiritual life and to leave you bad; more, and yet
 "more unable to do the right and avoid the wrong, and to
 "discover right from wrong; and that last is spiritual
 "death.

"Sinner, dream not of escaping punishment. You are
 "being punished now, for you are punishing yourself: and
 "you will continue to be punished for ever, for you will be
 "punishing yourself for ever, as long as you go on doing
 "wrong, and breaking the laws God has set to body, mind
 "and spirit*."

"If," Professor Plumptre writes, "if the punishment
 "comes as the natural consequence of sin; if the enduring
 "pain be the

"Memory of evil seen at last

"As evil, hateful, loathsome;

"then I cannot see how it can be otherwise than ever-
 "lasting. Christian Theology knows no Lethe to steep
 "the soul in forgetfulness of its own past; and if the sin
 "be not forgotten then the remembrance of sin must
 "throughout the ages be an element of pain and sorrow.
 "Experience indeed teaches that the penitent, in whom
 "that pain is keenest, finds it not incompatible with peace
 "and joy even now....I hold that it is at variance with our
 "belief in God's eternal Love and Righteousness, to assume
 "that any created will can be fixed in evil by a divine
 "decree, coming at the close of a few months or years of

* Charles Kingsley.

“an imperfect probation. And therefore that Scripture, “reason, and analogy, alike lead to the belief that we must “supplement the idea of probation by that of discipline “and education, which is begun in this life, but to which “we can set no time limits. The will in its imperishable “gift of freedom may frustrate God’s education hereafter, “as it frustrates it here. But if it does so, it is because “it is kicking against the pricks of the longsuffering that “is leading it to repentance: and there, as here, it may “accept an endless punishment,—and find peace in the “acceptance*.”

This, then, is the question, will any of the human race persistently rebel against God’s holy will for ever? Will the strong man armed keep his goods for ever? And this is what the Scriptures do not reveal, and our church has not decided. Is it worth while—is it wise or true to have any opinion upon it? This however we *do* know: the Father has kept the times and seasons of the future in His own hands. And the most rebellious and stubborn of the human race are far safer, infinitely safer in His Hands, than in those opinions of the most loving and tender of men, who would fain make haste to decide what will be best for their brethren; for He alone is Unchangeable†, He alone is Just and Holy Love.

* Letter from Prof. Plumptre, Appendix to *Eternal Hope*.

† The unchangeableness of a Righteous Governor is inconsistent with His acting in the same manner under changed circumstances and to changed hearts. The unchangeableness which assures us God will never make wickedness compatible with peace and satisfaction in His creatures, assures us also He can never will the death of the sinner.

PART III.

INTERNAL EVIDENCES.

LECTURE X.

MARKS OF REVELATION AND INSPIRATION IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

“Is God the Revealer? Can He reveal? Can He make us know what He is, how we are related to Him, what we are? Bibles, creeds, holiest traditions of the Church, all answer yes; He only does or can reveal anything.”

F. D. MAURICE, *Claims of the Bible and Science.*

WE come now to the last, the most important, and the fullest portion of Christian evidences, to those proofs of the superhuman and Divine origin of our Revelation and of the objective reality of the supernatural events it declares to us, which are afforded both by the contents of the Revelation itself, and by the record of them which is contained in our Scriptures. These are so manifold, I can only attempt to enumerate a few of them, trying so to classify them as to help you to study them for yourselves, and to clear away some of the current objections against them. First then we have to consider the evidence that these Revelations are from God to us; and that the record of them contained in the Bible is substantially authentic, the writers having been inspired and overruled by God in what they set down as from Him.

Secondly the critical and historical evidences of the substantial truthfulness of the Scripture histories.

And lastly the evidence from the Divine character of Christ Himself, and from the results of His coming.

You will observe that these are three entirely distinct and independent classes of evidence. The failure of proof for the first would not in any degree weaken the evidences for the second. The mere want of absolute proof of the authenticity of the Scripture history, could not affect the evidence we have that the Revelations embodied in that history are Divine. Neither will any incompleteness in the proof of the two first, take aught from the completeness of the last. They are cumulative in their results, because they are independent in their sources.

We will take the first to-day. We assert the two-fold fact that God has revealed Himself to us, as our Personal Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, speaking to the fathers through the Prophets in sundry portions and in divers manners; and speaking to us in His Son. We assert direct Revelation and actual Inspiration. How can we prove either?

Do not think I am trifling if I remind you here once more of a rule that may well be called a truism. Our religion is a historical and an existing fact, and a fact of the first magnitude in its past and its present results. The question we are considering is not its existence but its origin, how it came to exist and spread. And here only two hypotheses are possible. For it professes to have its origin in certain direct communications from God to man; and it is based on facts concerning God, which are of such a nature that they can only be known to men by Revelation. Therefore either it does contain a true communication from God, or it has its origin in some idol of the

human mind. The first hypothesis adequately accounts for the phenomena of its growth, and their historic results. It remains for those who reject this explanation, to supply an equally adequate explanation of all these facts on the second hypothesis. If the latter hypothesis is true the marks of a human origin cannot fail to be found in the contents of the supposed Revelation, or in the circumstances of its growth and transmission. But if these are such as preclude the possibility of a merely human origin, it remains that it must be Divine.

The method in which these Revelations are given us in the Bible is such, as to afford us evidence of this kind in the greatest abundance and variety.

It tells us of God's converse with men, making Himself known in His relations to them, as Creator, Governor, Protector, Redeemer and Sanctifier. All these relations of God to men involve answering relations of men to God; the visible universe is not more full of these answering marks, than is the heart of man.

But the Bible also records the answering converse of men with God. It shows us incidentally, and for the most part in their own words, the inner religious life of the men of old who received these Revelations of God, and responded to them. These Revelations were not given once for all, but unfolded one by one to successive generations. Does the resultant religious life correspond to this? Does the worship and communion with God ascribed to Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, correspond to the communication said to be made to each respectively? No human ingenuity could prevent incongruities here.

To enter into these successive Revelations, and get at the full significance of each, we must be able to realize the spiritual condition of those to whom they were made.

And that we may rightly understand their response, we must know so much of their history as will enable us to enter into their circumstances, and to receive the message as they would receive it, who had it uncompleted. This the histories and the biographies of the Bible enable us to do, thus opening to us a new set of tests historical, moral and spiritual.

But even apart from direct Revelation, we are not left without sufficiently clear indications that the Power which causes the Cosmos does design communication with our minds, and revelation to us of a spiritual presence underlying its phenomena. We have already seen that the phenomena of our own consciousness and of the visible world are, and have always been, revelations to minds constituted like ours of a purpose, wisdom, and power that are indefinitely superhuman. We found a visible universe saturated through and through with those marks of foresight, patience and skill, which we can only legitimately class as marks of mind, and which do address our minds. We found conscience revealing to us a moral law of right and wrong the sanction of which is certainly not from ourselves or from men; whilst a moral law so inevitably demands a moral Lawgiver, that the idea of the first includes the second. We found these revelations apparently embodied in all the phenomena which we can study of set purpose; being far too much, too varied in manifestation, and too unanimous in testimony, to be attributed to accidental coincidence by any fair scientific mind.

But whilst these revelations form an actual communication to the human race; whilst their voice is powerful enough to arouse attention and awe; while they go far enough to awaken a growing,—often an intense desire and yearning to learn more and more definitely what this

Mighty Being is, they are too vague and mysterious to satisfy them.

The law of continuity of developement then appears here to demand a continuous and progressive revelation. Arguing from what God has done, (according to the theory of developement which in the domain of mind seems certainly true), in awakening capacities and resultant desires in His sentient creatures; and then bending the efforts thus roused to the pushing on that progressive developement, which will at once secure the satisfaction of those first desires and awaken capacities for still higher ones;—arguing from what God has done to what He will do; we must have expected, that having thus deliberately and of set purpose awakened in the human heart the desire to know Himself and to have communication with Him, He would in due time and measure satisfy that desire. Two other considerations strengthen this conclusion. The fall of man,—his all but inevitable disobedience to the law of conscience, has made a fresh revelation needful to tell us how the Lawgiver will deal with sinful creatures suffering under those penalties of broken laws, which acting uninterruptedly must reverse developement into degradation. And this agrees with the object of our Revelation, which is to make known to us God as the Redeemer, and “historically to prepare for and finally “to consummate that Redemption” to the necessity, efficiency, and reasonableness of which moral science so strongly testifies. And further, even for a normal and unbroken upward developement, a progressive revelation would be needed. It is historically certain that it is the moral and religious convictions which prevail in any community, that mainly determine their actions and therefore the level of their condition*. If therefore the condition of

* Bunsen's *God in History*, Book 1, see §§ 7, 8, 9.

men is to be raised, if they themselves are to be raised, their religious convictions and their moral standard must become purer, more definite and higher.

Thus our divine Revelation does not come before us as an abrupt arbitrary or abnormal interference with the natural course of human development: but rather as the necessary condition, the natural continuance of a Purpose otherwise made known to us: it comes to us as an orderly spiritual development, stamped with that character which distinguishes God's works from men's,—the endless living growth from the finished production. It is supernatural only if we confine natural to 'physical' processes: it is its entire absence that would be unnatural, an abnormal breach of continuity in the moral world. Can the same be said of the means by which it professes to be given—inspiration? To some extent we think it can. Inspiration assumes two facts, God's directly communicating thoughts and purposes to the souls of men, and men's receiving, comprehending and embracing these thoughts and purposes. There is nothing unnatural in these assumptions. It would be absurd to assume that God's infinity forbids His communicating directly with the finite minds of men as readily as we have seen He does address their minds indirectly through the dumb show of visible sequences, visible beauty, and directly in conscience. It would be absurd to assume that He Who has given us the power of revealing our thoughts and purposes to each other in definite language, and of recording them for following generations, cannot Himself reveal any truth definitely and directly, if He will, or cause it to be faithfully recorded and transmitted, either with substantial or with literal correctness if that should be more fitting.

On the other hand, that men have a capacity for receiving such communications from other than human

sources has been recognized, and recorded, rightly or wrongly, in this very word inspiration. "Inspiration," our dictionaries tell us, "is the breathing of thoughts, actions, " or movements into the soul, by a Superior Power*." Or it is "an overpowering impression of any truth, made upon " the mind by God." In one or other of these senses the word has been used by secular writers, both ancient and modern, just as positively as it is used by Christians. Socrates avowed his dependence on it. Homer and Virgil begin their poems by calling on the Muse to reveal the hidden but divine Cause of the human woes they desire to sing. Voltaire acknowledged the reality of this experience when he reminds his friend Chabanon †, "you know that it " is necessary to receive inspiration, 'et ne la jamais cher- " cher.'" The word 'person' itself is said to be a record of the same experience. "A person," says Lange, "is one to " whom a distinct function is given, e.g. as to a character in " a play." "A person is a being per quam sonat Spiritus ; " one inspired by God and called by Him to a distinct func- " tion in the world‡." However this may be, the constant use of the term inspiration shows there must be some fact of human experience underlying and causing its use. I think all who have thought out any important subject, and gained some new light on it for themselves, will be conscious that what has happened has been something of this kind. They have studied the facts laid before them, compared them together, found the conclusions drawn from them have been truly drawn, and felt they have not solved the whole. They may have returned to it again and again, and confused, perplexed, have felt as though their minds were involved in a whirling pool of unconnected ir-

* *Littre's Dictionnaire Français.* † *Lettres de Voltaire.*

‡ *Charles Kingsley.*

reconcilable conclusions, or beating against an adamantine wall of darkness. Now they may get out of this by an act of will; "this shall be the conclusion, and the whole of it:" then they have gone wrong. Or they may have waited, asking for light, still regarding the difficulty but no longer struggling against it. And then, sooner or later, the reconciling idea has come, harmonizing the opposing conclusions, showing what lay hid behind all the facts. If they grasp the new truth and hold it firmly till they have definitely represented it to themselves, and expressed it in adequate words, they have secured a fresh step and can start anew from this wider platform: too often, not sufficiently strong in attention, we let it go again without mastering it.

It is the consciousness that the new idea has come to them, has not been created by them, which has caused men to speak of inspiration. Their experience has been that the thought has been breathed into their minds; their inference,—that it has been communicated by a Higher Intelligence than their own. We note further, it has been the best, highest and widest truths and ideas, that have thus been referred to inspiration and a super-human origin. It may indeed be said the last is a mere unproved assumption; be it so; the fact remains that human experience has recorded in language, that these higher and wider truths are not of men's own discovery or creation. And as this is not a world of causeless originations but of order, in its moral as well as in its physical sequences, the thoughts which are 'received' must be received from some other mind than ours, the thoughts which do not originate in human intelligence must originate elsewhere.

Now it is in a sense similar to that given above, that

the fact of inspiration is taught in the Scriptures; which continually refer alike the perception and the truth perceived to the gift and the revealing act of God*. No-where in the Bible is inspiration limited to the writers of the sacred books, or to any one race or people. On the contrary, the reality of this experience, and the truth of the conclusion that it comes directly from God is asserted in the widest manner. The skill of the artist who fashioned the Tabernacle; the skill of the husbandmen who sow the corn; the skill of the patriot warrior, the wisdom of the king and his senators; all eloquence, all knowledge, all wisdom, are claimed as gifts of inspiration from God, "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts, Who hath given understanding to the heart." Elihu had waited while his elders spake, for he thought that the experience of years should give wisdom; but when they said nothing to the purpose, he called to mind that after all it is not age but the Inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding. St James sums up all these facts when he says, "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning†." If, then, we receive what the Bible itself teaches us, we must guard ourselves from rounding off its statement that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," with our narrow human negative, denying that what is true in other revelations or sacred writings can have been from God. If we listen to St John we shall hold that whatever

* As in Job xxxii. 7, 8, xxxviii. 36; Exodus iv. 15, xxxi. 1—6; 1. Kings iii. 7—12, iv. 29; 1. Chron. xxii. 12; Isaiah xxviii. 6, 9, 24—29; Daniel i. 17—20, v. 11—14; Ps. li. 6. In the New Testament Matthew xi. 25—27, xvi. 16, 17; John i. ; Gal. i. 15, 16; II. Timothy iii. 15—17 (see new version); James i. 5.

† James i. 17.

light there was in Eastern faiths and in Grecian philosophies—all was from the Divine Word, our Lord. If we listen to St Paul we shall believe that God never left any Gentile nation without witness concerning Himself. If we listen to David we shall know God's revealing word "went out into all lands and into the ends of the earth." And if we hearken to Isaiah, we shall hear how even in his day Gentiles were accepted seekers after God, and learned to cry to Jehovah, "Doubtless Thou art our Father, though "Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us "not: Thou, O Jehovah, our Father, our Redeemer from "everlasting is Thy name*." Thus if we regard the inspiration given to the successive writers of the sacred Canon in the light of Scripture itself, we shall not look upon it as an entirely new and exceptional work of the Holy Spirit; but rather as the consummation of His ordinary and constant work; who when He calls any person to a special function either in His world or His Church, never fails to supply to the consenting worker the inspiration needed to fulfil it, according to the measure of his need, his attention and obedience.

Take another fact: that the world's history has been mainly determined, divided, and marked off into epochs by the advent of one or more great men. "No considerable "change has occurred in the social state of any community, "without a previous change in their intellectual convictions. And such a change of convictions has ever been "preceded by the advent of some great man or of a few "great men; who have gathered up the truths already "possessed by their people; have freed what was true in "the old faith from the superstitions or materialisms that "had gathered round it; have reimbodied it in a new

* Isaiah lxiii. 15, 16.

“form, adding to it the further truth, the want of which
“was falsifying it, and have succeeded in impressing this
“new revelation on their age and nation*.” “Thus all
“the life of history proceeds from individuals; and all that
“is truly creative, conservative, propulsive in the life of an
“individual, flows from the Image of God which is in him.
“So far as he does not resist being made the organ of the
“Divine thought, he becomes a spiritual power for the
“whole community for which he feels, thinks, acts, writes
“and creates. The thought he has taught is assimilated
“and becomes common property; and this heritage of
“ideas works on through the action of the individual
“minds who are bound together by its power, and stamps
“its mould on the succeeding generations as truly as it
“received its impress from one great Personality. Person-
“ality is the lever of the world’s history, the whole history
“of the world is inexplicable without it.”

Now if we turn to the Bible, we find its ancient histories are thus marked off into distinct epochs, each preceded by the coming of some one or more greater men, to whom “the word of the Lord” came: who did not resist being made the organ of the Divine word, who succeeded in reforming the corrupted faith of his people, and in impressing the new revelation upon it. Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Nehemiah and Ezra, and the prophets rise up in a long succession, as men who had a Divine revelation to add, and who by giving it did determine the history of their people; who all confessed they were only the organs of God’s inspiration.

Again then we find that as the revelations and inspirations recorded in our Scriptures are no anomalous or isolated facts; so neither is that essential union between

* Bunsen’s *God in History*, Book 1, § 8, p. 35.

God's revealing word and the human history therein related an exceptional or unwonted union. The successive appearance of inspired men in the pages of the Bible, is in accordance with the uniform law of God's Providence as learnt from human history.

And here we come on another fact. The Bible law of selection and deprivation of this Divine teaching, is, so far as we can trace it, verified alike in secular and in Bible history. For the nations to whom these great men—creators of history as they have been called—have been sent, or to speak more within our knowledge, the nations in which their coming has been fruitful, have been selected nations and few in number. But all races which have played any great part in the progress of human development, have not only had their great men, but have received their revelation, and have consequently been able to civilize, and to some extent to bless other tribes and races; do in many cases bless us still. Thus the fact that God gave a special revelation to Abraham and to his seed after him, stands not out as an exceptional or arbitrary choice. It is only a more complete and transcendent instance of the method in which God's higher spiritual blessings have been communicated to mankind, through selected races. And the law of this selection is that great moral law, by which the world's history, and the history of every individual man, woman and child in the world is governed,—the law that “to him that hath shall more be given; “from him that hath not shall be taken away even that “he hath.” It is the law of habit, applied to nations. There were certainly in Abraham's day other heads of tribes and nations who knew and worshipped the Holy God without degrading images*. But none of them were

* Melchisedec was one of them ; who left no seed behind him.

careful as Abraham was to bind up that worship in the life of his family: none but he left country and kinsmen to dwell as a stranger in a foreign land, in order to preserve his race pure from the morally and intellectually debasing idol worship which was growing up among their kindred. And therefore none of their families preserved the light and none lasted: of none of them could it be possible that all nations should be blest in their seed. But Abraham, guided more and more by God because he obeyed the guidance, succeeded in commanding his children and household after him, so that they should keep the way of the Lord. So strongly did Abraham lay this foundation of family life in the dedication of the whole tribe to God, that his children have kept the impress for near 4,000 years, and scattered over the world as scarcely any other race is scattered, still preserve their race, and the profession of Abraham's faith.

So again when the family grew into a nation, their national life was moulded and its laws prescribed by revelation from God. Do we ask, why for this nation more than for any other?—are we sure it was this nation exclusively that had laws from God? did not St Paul, speaking to men living under the Roman Government, say that the law to which they were subject was an ordinance of God? But whilst Israel was waiting for help and guidance from God, the other nations were looking for it from themselves, their allies, their inhuman idols. Certainly God did give great lawgivers to other nations, who moulded their national instincts and customs into some abiding and vigorous form. But of these Moses alone acknowledged it was God's wisdom not his own, God's light not his, that prescribed their laws. Notice how carefully throughout the whole body of the law, and in every added rite and

ceremony this truth was engrained, bound up in, made the sanction of all,—that law is binding because it is God's law, ordained by Him, resting on His authority. The mind of the nation slowly assimilating this revelation became saturated with it: every historical event that befell them was seen by them to be from God, was a revelation to them of God's will, a visible display of His righteous government, of His pardoning mercy. Hence they learnt that their righteousness, their morality, must be measured by God's rule, not by their own, not by that which governed the tribes around them. And so in writing the records of Israel, their historians saw the shortcomings of the nation, and relate their sins and God's goodness. Other nations sinned and fell as far below their lower standard as Israel below its higher one: but those nations found no revelation in their own history, they were looking no higher than themselves, and so they could not profit by their falls. God gave to them also historians and poets and prophets, but these did not acknowledge God in all things, or the nations to whom they were sent did not learn from them; and so they became in time unable to receive further revelations from God, and ceasing to learn, ceased to grow, lost what they had known in corrupt superstitions, and for the most part fell to pieces. The Jewish poet-prophets looking to God for guidance and seeking His glory not their own, were capable of receiving further revelations from Him, and did receive them. A further fact of history tends to confirm this. None of those other nations who had great men once, have continued to have them. Few of them appear now to be capable of receiving inspiration from any creative man, if he were born among them. Since the Jews rejected Christ they also have remained barren. "From him that hath

“not shall be taken away that he hath :” he loses it, because he has made himself incapable of using it.

Then the revelation recorded in the Bible differs from all other religious systems in this ; that it has based its outward developement on the family, social, and national relations of men ; has fully recognized their divine sanction, and whilst making them more expansive, less absolute and exclusive in the letter, has flooded them all with a spiritual power and intenser life, by founding them on God’s revelations to us as persons, and our personal relations to God. Other religious systems have been built up for the most part on the annihilation of the family : none have known how to harmonize the three lower relations with the Divine.

To sum up this part of the case then : we find in our Revelation the true complement of nature’s revelations. In respect both of the matter revealed, the mode of communication, the law of its distribution, and the historical results, it presents us not with any artificial addition to, or breach of, natural laws, but with a true continuance of the general laws of man’s developement. It gives new life and power to social relations. It gives an adequate explanation of man’s actual condition, and a key to the phenomena of history, enables us to grasp the principle which underlies them, and reduces them to orderly sequences. Can it be of merely human origin ?

The first characteristic of our Revelation which will guide us in answering this question, is that it has all along been a progressive and continuous one. Other religions presented themselves as complete from the first ; they were given once for all. No preparatory revelation had professedly led up to them, no succeeding revelation has been built upon them. But our’s, from the first hope

given to Adam, to the last promise and prayer in the Apocalypse, has been growing fuller and clearer*. From epoch to epoch, from stage to stage, additional relations have been given, through men of different degrees of civilization, different modes of thought, wholly different circumstances: each revelation has been new in substance and in answering form of worship, yet each forming a true developement of the truths already known, never undoing what had been done, but giving its higher and true, though often unexpected developement. Each successive revelation has not been simply added to the preceding ones, it has flooded them with new force and new fullness of meaning. And in each one of these progressive epochs, men have been bidden to look forward to the time when they should receive fuller light, and a more complete revelation† from God: in the Christian revelation not less but more definitely than ever, with more earnestness of desire, more certainty of hope, and with a deepening conviction of the infinite importance of increasing knowledge of God. Such an organised progressive developement, is, as we have seen, the true mark of the Divine in nature; it is therefore the mark we ought to expect in any direct revelation of God's grace; and here we find it. It not only makes it credible that this whole course of revelation is God's work; it goes far to prove it cannot be man's‡.

The second characteristic of our Revelation is, that the

* E. g. Gen. iii. 15, ix., xv. 1, xvii. 1; Exodus iii. 13—16, vi. 2—8, xxxiii. 18, 19, xxxiv. 5—7. The Psalms, Prophets, and New Testament.

† Deut. xviii. 15, 18; Isaiah xi. 9; Jeremiah xxxi. 31—34, i. Cor. xiii. 9—12; John xvi. 13—15; i. John iii. 2—3. See note E.

‡ The Koran, professing to carry on the revelation of Moses, gives us an example of what a human piecing on or adding of one revelation to another can effect, in the way of accomplishing a consistent developement.

truths thus taught have been embodied in actual historical facts. The word of God to Noah was fulfilled by his deliverance from the flood ; the promises specifically made to Abraham were to his seed actual possessions : all nations are being blessed through his seed. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt was not merely a revealed message, but an act of God. The revelation made to us in Christ, consists not only of His words but of His birth, His life, His deeds, His death and resurrection. Just as our moral and social relations to each other and to our country are revealed to us in the facts and events of our lives, so in our Revelation our spiritual relations to God are unfolded not merely in words once spoken, but in a series of historical events accompanying or following the words, and spread over a series of more than 4,000 years. If the express words were taken away the facts would remain, implicitly containing the very same revelation. It would be much to show we have here one series of recorded inspirations, historically continued in a true and consistent sequence of developement through this space of time. But what we actually find is a two-fold cord of divine revelations, and of answering events. No other religious creed has even pretended to give its revelation in a long series of historical events, none of them are founded on history, nor do they throw much light on the meaning of history.

Our Revelation does. Confirming what nature's revelations and human conscience suggested—that the Creator God is also the Sovereign and Righteous ruler of men ; the Scripture proceeds to unfold in the history of the one nation which received this truth, how God governs nations by general laws, or customs of God, regulated, differentiated, and applied by continual acts of what we in our blind-

ness are forced to call special Providences*, meeting every changing moral condition, answering every earnest work and prayer, checking every self-willed error, destroying sin, aiding every effort after life, and thus disciplining the nation and making them capable of receiving the higher revelation that was to follow. Thus it—in the Old Testament specially—shows us in the history of God's sovereign moral government, that method, at once of regulation for the present and of preparation for the future, of which modern science is beginning to get a glimpse in the physical history of God's Cosmos. No other religious systems afford us either so fruitful an explanation of national histories, or the slightest analogy to the revelations of physical science. And yet if both are carried on by the steadfast will of the Eternal Unity, must not the results be stamped with some such marks of the Oneness of the Cause?

Then, again, this Revelation was from the first prophetic; and its prophecies have been already in a great measure fulfilled in history. Give up what individual prophecies we may, it is a simple matter of historical fact that the faith of the old world believers in Jehovah was fixed all along on the coming of that Seed of the woman who should conquer the enemy; that Seed in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, the Shiloh, the great Prophet, like Moses a new Lawgiver, the Son and Lord of David, the Virgin's Son, the Immanuel, the Prince of Peace, the righteous Servant of God bruised for our iniquities, the Messiah of Daniel, the Jehovah Messenger of Malachi. No one pretends that any one of these prophecies can have been written at a later date than 200

* Which are doubtless only the luminous spots which make God's constant guidance and government visible to our feeble sight.

years before the coming of Christ : and as far as the question of prophecy is concerned, 200 is as decisive as 2000. No one denies that the Jews, for two or three centuries before the birth of Christ at Bethlehem, understood these passages to be speaking to them of their coming Messiah. If you read them side by side with the histories of their fulfilment in the New Testament and without any theory at all about prophecy, striving only to enter more closely into the spirit and sense of the two records; the more clearly will these predescriptions of Christ,—of His coming, His offices, His birth, life and work, His rejection, the circumstances of His death and burial, His resurrection and ascension, and His pouring out His Spirit on His people;—force themselves upon you as literally fulfilled. If the critic asks us to prove that such passages were written with any reference in the mind of the writer to the future Saviour, we answer, “what the actual writer “intended or did not intend, is a matter which has passed “out of our ken. But the written words remain: and “they are not only descriptions of Christ, they give us a “distinct biography of the principal events of His life; “they are far too numerous, various, and exact to be explained as chance coincidences. Intentional fulfilment is “out of the question: it would require the active and most “acute co-operation of the enemies of Christ with Himself “and His disciples in the task of fulfilling them.”

The objection assumes there can be nothing in the words of a writer, which was not consciously in his mind and intention when he wrote them, or at any rate nothing which at the time he could not historically know. But this—which is not absolutely true of any true speech, for our words themselves mean more than we have present in our minds when we use them—is not true of any inspired

saying whatever. It is an essential characteristic of a truly inspired saying, that it is a pregnant saying, a many-sided saying*. Thus this objection begs the question of inspiration, and of Divine Guidance leading the men to write down the "word of the Lord," which came to them not for the men of their own day only, but for all generations of men: and it leaves the fact that these brief biographical sketches were written some hundred years before He came who lived the life and suffered the death they foretold, without any explanation.

Further this Revelation is still in God's Providence, and as we believe by the express guidance of the Holy Spirit, growing and progressive. It is a strange mistake but one not confined to objectors, to hold that our Christian Revelation came to a dead stop with the Apocalypse. Such a mistake shows a singular ignorance of Church History, and puts a needless stumblingblock in the way of those who feel their need of a living revelation now, and one that shall meet the wants of this day rather than those of Domitian's time. A divine revelation should be a living and therefore a growing one: let us see how our revelation satisfies this condition.

"Revelation must directly on its entrance be rightly understood essentially, and this is guaranteed by Inspiration: but it cannot be understood with absolute clearness and completeness at once. It must itself educate sinful humanity step by step to its clear and full understanding, which is only to be done very gradually and by a long series of approximations. The complete understanding of

* Coleridge was once interpreting the ideas contained in some passage of Shakespeare: he found them so philosophically comprehensive that one of his hearers objected: "I am sure," he said, "Shakespeare never meant all that." "If Shakespeare did not, his genius did," Coleridge replied, and went on with his exposition.

“the parts moreover can only be intelligible by the whole, “and the whole is equally conditional on the understanding “of every part*.” And this is the process that has been going on ever since the Day of Pentecost. First one portion then another was called into prominence by the needs of the church; they were misunderstood, for each in turn was put for the whole: hence arose schisms and heresies, which considered and discussed and disproved, were the means of bringing that portion of the truth into fuller knowledge and more distinct expression. This work of unfolding has never stood still: it is certainly not standing still now. The discoveries in physical and in mental science, the doubts and attacks of sceptics, the mistakes and disputes of believers, are all unveiling more and more of the depth and breadth and height of our Revelation. They have always been, and are now perhaps more than ever, forcing Christian students to look at it from different standing-points, to extend their researches, to learn something more of the relation of its different parts to the whole. The progress which these modern attacks have forced its students to make in the more accurate knowledge of the Scriptures themselves—to take only one point—is so marvellous, it seems impossible not to see God’s Hand in it, answering His questioners in His own Providence.

But now I want you to notice how greatly our Revelation differs, in respect of this continual developement and gradually increasing light, from all other religious faiths, which gathered round some great truth of God’s revealing but were systematized and completed by men. For the mark of what is Divine in any true philosophy, is that it awakens and satisfies some real need of men’s higher and truer nature: to seize on that answer, and for

* Rôthe, *Zur Dogmatik*.

the sake of its exceeding preciousness to deny and try to crush out all other needs—that is the mark of what is human in any religious system. It is not hard to see this in the ancient faiths. The Brahmin worshipped the One Celestial Intelligence, but found He could only speak to the wise, and so the wise man, the Brahmin, became Brahma. The Bhuddist longed for rest, and found it in the absorbing contemplation of the One who is clear light. But to find it, it seemed to him needful to annihilate all human emotions and desires, and therefore all action. The Chinese longed for perfect order and for the sake of it trampled on progress. The Mahomedan demanded a Supreme and Perfect Ruler and became the slave of a dead fate. Plato could only imagine a perfect state by annihilating the family and its human affections*. Jewish Rabbis and Christian teachers have ever been striving to do the same thing; to round off the special portion of truth their age needed, in a perfect definition with its completing negative, and to present it to the church as the whole. But they have never been suffered to succeed: the chain of revealing events went on, new needs of the human soul, thirsting for the Infinite God, broke out imperiously; broke up those incomplete faiths and left them lifeless, but found their full and satisfying answer in the manifold riches of God as revealed in Christ. Thus our Revelation has an answer for every true spiritual need of the human heart and soul: and this demonstrates its superhuman origin. No merely human being can ever know or feel all the possible capacities and needs of man: they are too full, too wide, too various; in every finite man there are some as yet unawakened. But there is not

* See on this subject F. D. Maurice's *Religions of the World*: and his "Ancient Philosophy," *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*.

one as yet awakened which has not found its full satisfaction in Christ, and in the Revelation made in and by Christ of the Father, and we are justified in believing there never will be.

And now turning to the records of this Revelation, to the Scriptures themselves, we find abundant marks that the writers of these books have been inspired and overruled in what they set down as from God, in a manner which marks it off from all other books whatsoever.

There are of course many features which it has in common with all good and great books, books which live; and this of necessity: for in the writings of inspired men it is obvious we get three factors,—the Divine Thought, the human mind the channel of communication, and the human language the instrument of communication. For aught we know, the second might be so used by the Divine Spirit, as that its human imperfections should have no effect whatever on the message. But it does not seem that this has been the case. St Paul tells us “we have this “treasure in earthen vessels”: and he would hardly have said this, if this condition had no effect at all on the expression of the inspired thought. Then human language is an instrument limited by the limitations of human minds, and we do not hesitate to say it must be inadequate to express God’s thought; that it is incapable of absolute exactness, and therefore of absolute infallibility, because it inevitably admits of different shades of meaning.

And this brings us to one characteristic of the Scripture statements, and that is, that almost in every case all these different shades of meaning are true: they are many-sided expressions, they can be applied to endlessly different circumstances, and will guide us clearly and rightly in cases which seem to have absolutely nothing at all in common.

The better you know the words of the Bible, the more perpetually will you find passages coming in and summing up in a few simple words, the result of some perhaps quite modern inquiry or original train of thought. It is not that these sayings are so elastic for they are most definite; it is that they are so true, true always and in all cases. You cannot press them too much. Take one example only—that one word “To him that hath shall more be given,” and its converse: you have in it the key to the child’s progress in its lesson, to all lives of men, to the history of nations, to all practical moral science, to all pilgrimages from earth to heaven, and now at last to all developement in nature. And thus it is that in giving up the theory of mechanical or verbal Inspiration—as inconsistent with the facts of imperfect MSS. and mistranslations*—the careful student only comes closer to that spiritual inspiration, is only the more certain that the truth, and its expression, are of God.

There is another mark of this, which would I think be quite inexplicable on any theory of its merely human origin. That is the unity of the whole. If we take the latest date for the earliest portions of our Bible; we find it contains writings “by nearly 50 different writers of every “order and condition—kings and shepherds, warriors and “fishermen, priests and publicans—separated from each “other by intervals of long centuries†.” We find the style of its different books as various as in any other collection of ancient literature of the same extent; the very languages in which these writers thought and wrote were not all the same. The imagery used, the conditions

* For had God designed to give us a verbally infallible Bible, these difficulties could not have prevented that Design being accomplished.

† *Catholic Thoughts*, by Rev. F. Myers. *Bible and Theology*, § 48.

of civilization described offer as great a variety as possible. The immediate object of the writers and their subject-matter are equally various: history, a code of civil laws, regulations of Divine worship, philosophy, proverbs, dramatic, lyric, pastoral, tragic and prophetic poetry, biographies, memoirs, private and general epistles—there is surely no class of literature which has not its representative, and that for the most part of a high degree of merit, in the Bible. Yet in all this human diversity the unity of thought and sentiment is its strongest characteristic; it is one organic Book, containing one Revelation. “The representations of God though continually progressive yet are always so in the same direction of Holiness and Love; and the history of man though always exhibiting him as sinful, yet never as hopelessly degraded. A revelation spreading itself over fifteen centuries, and uniformly growing and brightening, gradually lessening its own shadows, and at last changing itself into the perfect Day;—herein lies a testimony as to whence it came which it is impossible to gainsay.”...“We recognise the same characteristic tone throughout, leaving on the mind an impression of the Holiness of God and the Capacity of Humanity, which to this day the most enlightened feel it a task intellectually to master, and an impossibility practically to surpass*.”

If then we are asked how we know the Bible contains the inspired word of God: the answer is simply, because we find it is inspired with the same unity of thought, spirit and purpose; the same continuous unfolding of the same

* *Catholic Thoughts*, *ibid.* The reader should carefully study the whole of this section, in connection with this subject; quotations can only weaken the whole argument. This work has been published in the series of *Present-day Papers*, edited by the late Bishop Ewing, of Argyle.

Mind goes on through the whole of it, sometimes in one aspect, sometimes in another, but always the same. To attribute such a book to the fortuitous concurrence of fifty human minds writing in different centuries and under circumstances and conditions so various, would be to assert not a supernatural, but an unnatural phenomenon.

And nowhere is this Unity more evident, than where we pass from Malachi to Matthew—just where the widest break must have been expected. The New Testament history is unintelligible and inexplicable without the Old: a grand fulfilment, with nothing to fulfil,—a great consummation without any preparation, without anything to consummate; whilst without the New Testament, the Old presents us with a long series of sequences all pointing onwards, all preparing,—and then ending in nothing.

Then the Bible has a unique character; “Clearly on its first aspect, there lies an impress of Divinity on the Bible not found elsewhere. The Spirit of God so moves upon the face of its pages, that compared with all other Scriptures the Bible is holy, they are profane....This book is a record not merely of the most valuable of men’s speculations and discoveries concerning truth but emphatically of God’s revelations and instructions concerning it. Not merely an exposition of such laws and precepts as the reasonings intuitions and sentiments of men have agreed to pronounce the wisest and worthiest, but of such direct and special communications of the Divine Spirit to the spirits of individual men, as disclose Purposes of God, sanctions of duty and promises of help, which no man by searching could find out, but which it is the everlasting life of man’s spirit to take heed to, and his spiritual death to disregard*.” In other sacred books

* *Catholic Thoughts*, *ibid.*

we find man striving to conceive, and rise up towards God. In this we find God coming down to communicate of His fulness to men.

Hence the Bible differs from every other book in that it is equally intelligible, and equally comes home to the hearts and minds, the consciences and experiences of men of every race, of every climate, and of every degree of civilization. To the most highly cultivated minds of Europe and to the wandering gypsy, to the peasant villager of Hindustan and to the Esquimaux, to the Red Indian and the negro slave, to the lonely bushboy herding his master's flocks in the African desert—it speaks to all, so that each hears in the language of his own heart and experience, the wonderful works of God. And thus it is a living book. “This book, though in parts so old, is ever “living”—I am quoting the words of our own Bishop—“it speaks in every part to the inward soul: these are not “words on a dead page, suggestive of ideas alone; they “enter into the heart and soul. We find these old words “answering our modern difficulties; giving wings to our “prayers; revealing our hearts’ desires and needs to our- “selves; in some wonderful and inexplicable way con- “necting themselves with the springs of our thoughts and “the ultimate elements of our being. And for want of “any other word, we take that the Scripture itself has “provided, and speak of it as the living word. All the “other striking facts concerning it are as nothing to this “wondrous manifestation of the Spirit, and the testimony “of the soul itself to the Bible. And hence it is its own “best evidence. Where no argument however sound, no “rhetoric however striking, has any effect; the Book of “Life itself will often find its way into the inmost soul.” Let me add to these the words of an Irish peasant: “Sir, I “believe it is the book of God Himself, for nothing I’ve

"ever heard or read fits my heart like it: He that made the one made the other to my thinking. And it fits my life too: if I am glad, it makes me more glad; if I'm sorry it has a comforting word for me. All the books I ever read before are dead books, but this is a living book and nothing else*."

Thus it is unique in its results as well as in its character and history. "I confidently appeal to the assent of all devout readers of the Bible, whose own experience will testify to them that it is not so much the instructions and awakenings derived from the book, by which they have been so peculiarly edified in their communion with it; as the purifying and quickening influence felt on all sides, of a holy world pervaded throughout by supernatural power,—nay, of the direct presence of God and of heaven itself into which they are raised, as soon as they have passed the threshold of this marvellous book†."

And again, "When we look even for a moment at the history of this book;—the influences for good it has exerted in the world" (compared with the influence for cruelty of the Koran), "the grand web of interests and events which have been and are connected with it: the magnitude and variety of the Institutions to which it has given rise; how it has mingled itself with the deepest thoughts and feelings and utterances of men; and how this has been more and more the case the more spiritual and cultured the ages have become,—these too are considerations which at once and alone must compel every religious soul to render a homage to the Bible the most sincere and the most profound‡."

Thus there is "without doubt, something in the Old

* *The Manuscript Man.*

† Rothe, *Zur Dogmatik*. Third essay on Holy Scripture.

‡ *Bible and Theology*, § 1, Rev. F. Myers.

“as well as in the New Testament, quite different in kind
“as well as in degree from the sacred books of any other
“people: an unique element which has an unique effect
“on the human heart, life, and civilization. This remains
“after all possible deductions for ‘ignorance of science,
“‘errors in numbers, interpolations, mistakes of transcribers,’
“whereof we have heard of late a great deal too much, and
“ought to care nothing. For granting them all (and the
“greater part I do not grant), the unique element is there;
“the powerful and working element, the inspired and
“Divine element, which has converted, and still converts
“millions of souls: and that is just what Christendom in
“all ages has held it to be—the account of certain noble
“acts of God, not of noble thoughts of men*.”

The Scriptures then taken as a whole give us such a book as could not have proceeded from the minds of men left to their own best powers. Its unity, its holiness, its spiritual and its practical power, the gradual evolution of one consistent though progressive body of truth, incarnated in the events of the world's history and forming one whole composed of manifold organic parts; speaking with equal power to every race and every age of men,—all this is at once real, and superhuman. The only possible explanation of the fact that this Book exists, is that it has been throughout inspired, guided, guarded by the Spirit of God: that it is that divinely authentic record which we have seen is the essential and necessary complement of His Revelation of Himself and His works to us.

It is God's book, addressed to our minds: therefore we are bound to employ our understandings upon it. It is given us in human language, and therefore the best and truest criticism we possess is to be employed in investigating

* Charles Kingsley, *Sermons on the Pentateuch*, Dedication.

its meaning. It is addressed to our reason, and therefore we must strive to exercise reason in the attempt to apprehend its revelations. But when we have ascertained what its teaching is as far as we can, we must deal with its broad and clear statements, as we do with the ascertained facts of nature, of mind, of morals. And it is as unphilosophical and unscientific to reject its declarations concerning God and His Son, because they pass man's understanding—because we could never have discovered them,—or even dreamt of them without Christ's direct declaration, as it would be for a man to reject a demonstrated fact of science, because it is at present inexplicable, and without science undiscoverable. Neither in secular nor in religious matters, neither in physical science nor in theology, are facts or truths limited by the present limitations of our understandings. But He by whose loving care the Scriptures have been provided for our instruction has promised us therein, that though now we often know not what He does, we shall understand hereafter, that His Spirit will lead His people on into all truth. And thus we know that though even in the Scriptures themselves there are many things which now we see as in a glass darkly, yet the time will come when we shall see face to face; though now we know only in part, then, by God's great grace we shall know fully, even as we have been fully known. For His Revelation is as unending as His Love.

“These eyes that dazzled now and weak
At glancing motes in sunbeams wink
Shall see the King's full glory break
Nor from the blissful vision shrink,
In fearless love and hope uncloyed
For ever on that ocean bright
Empowered to gaze; and undestroyed
Deeper and deeper sink in light.”

LECTURE XI.

THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORDS.

“Questions of the supernatural are wholly irrelevant in inquiries as to the authorship or the date of any history. They may be the motive but they cannot be the reason of the answer given, without begging the question.”

Deuteronomy and its Critics.

IN entering to-day on the second part of these internal marks of the Divine origin of our Revelation ; i.e. on the critical and historical evidences of the substantial truthfulness of the Scripture history, it is necessary clearly to apprehend the logical value of this class of evidences. And this is distinctly limited : it is very interesting and for literary purposes very important to know who wrote these various books, and at what time they were written. But no answer obtained by this critical research can at all affect the character of the Bible itself, or weaken those overwhelming evidences of its origin which we briefly reviewed when we last met. Whether Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays or not : whether the Iliad and Odyssey were written by Homer, or “by some other man, bearing the same name, who lived afterwards” : those books are what they always have been, and their value to men is just what it was.

The questions who, or how many persons wrote Isaiah,

or the Pentateuch, or the Gospels, and when they were written, are interesting and important questions: but even if none of these can be answered satisfactorily—even were we obliged to own, we can give no account at all of these books, who wrote them or when they were written—none the less would the fact remain, that we have in these Scriptures a spiritually adequate record—"an organ fully "adequate to generate the Divine Life again and again for "all the races of men for which God has given it, and "faithfully rendering the characteristics of the spirit and "of the testimony of Revelation*."

The Old Testament then contains mainly a history of one people; their origin, their laws, their vicissitudes, regarded, uniformly by all its numerous writers, from the standing-point of their covenanted relations to God. As a history it needs just such proofs as those by which the truthfulness of any other ancient history is tested, such as internal evidences, and consistency of the parts with each other, contemporary literature, linguistic, geographical, and archæological evidence may afford. And we have no right to demand higher or more exact evidence of this kind for the trustworthiness of the Scripture narratives, than are applied to the histories of Herodotus or of Froissart.

But as these Scriptures claim to record direct revelation from God, they must furnish adequate evidence of this also; first, in the subject-matter which they record, and secondly, in their harmonizing with and forming one consistent whole with the Christian revelations recorded in the New Testament.

First then as to the historical trustworthiness of the Old Testament narratives. Mr Vaughan writes: "The Old

* Beck quoted by Röhre, *Zur Dogmatik*.

"Testament comes down to us as a whole made up quite "2,000 years ago from the surviving literature of a people "which had already grown old*." The Septuagint version of the Pentateuch was made under the earlier Ptolemies, about 270 years before Christ: "offering an independent "witness as to the early state of the Biblical books, and "vindicating the substantial accuracy of their transmission†."

The only question which has been raised of much importance is as to the date and the trustworthiness of the Pentateuch, and its histories. On the one side many modern critics, whose scholarship makes their opinions worthy of consideration, deny it was written by Moses, and assign different dates and different writers for it: varying from Samuel, the time of the kings and prophets, to Ezra and the return from the Captivity, and even to later dates still. But there is no unanimity amongst these at present: the same reasons alleged by some in proof of one date, being given by others as proofs of a different date and another authorship.

On the other hand, we have (i) the unbroken tradition of the Jews themselves, beginning with the later books of Scripture, the histories, the prophets and the Psalms, all referring the law of the Pentateuch to Moses. (ii) The law is so embedded in the history of the four last books of the Pentateuch, that it must be referred to the same authors. (iii) The books themselves belong to the time to which they refer, and not to the time these later critics assign them. (iv) They are really one book, in unity of plan, spirit and style.

* *Our Christian Hope.*

† See also *The Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, sections 4 and 5. Prof. R. Smith.

And lastly the whole authority of Christ Himself and of His apostles, assigns the law to Moses, and asserts its having been given by God through Moses.

It is therefore to these five first books we must chiefly attend now. We have seen that they were possessed and received as authentic in the form we have them, when the Septuagint was written, B.C. 270.

Going backwards to the time of Ezra (450 B.C.) we find that he read to all the people "the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel." And that he did this at the demand of "all the people gathered together as one man*." The rest of the history in Nehemiah goes to show that this "book of the Law of the Lord" was substantially the same as that we now have in the Pentateuch, in both versions.

Indeed the practice of reading a portion of the law or Pentateuch and of the prophets weekly on the Sabbath-days, in every synagogue throughout the land, would effectually prevent any material change in the books so read, after that practice began, apparently soon after the return from Babylon, certainly from a very early date. But how came the people in Ezra's day to know there was any "book of the law of Moses, which the Lord commanded"? This demand is scarcely consistent with the idea that Ezra wrote it: it clearly shows that if he did, it was a forgery, which he must have first written, then persuaded all the people, "as one man," to believe it was as old as Moses, a code of laws given by God to their fathers, of the existence of which they had known all their lives; and so persuaded them to come and demand of him to read it to them.

But if a book is to be classed as a forgery, it must bear

* Nehemiah viii.

internal marks of forgery. And we would ask any one of ordinary capacity in literature whether it is possible that the same man who wrote the book of Ezra, *could* have written, even from old legends and traditions, the books of Genesis or of Deuteronomy*? The natural inference is that the people knew of this law of Moses, as the possession of their fathers.

And this their earlier history shows they did. About 170 years before this, mention is made of the discovery in the temple of a "book of the law of the Lord by the hand of Moses": which Josiah read to all the people, and which was followed by a celebration of the Passover, and a reformation of worship and of morals, answering to the directions given in the law as we have it now, and as we know the Jews had it only 200 years later†.

* Such an assertion might be paralleled by ascribing Froissart's *Chronicles* to Dr Johnson, or *La Mort d'Arthur* to Bishop Burnet.

† Prof. Rob. Smith is of opinion that this "book of the law of the Lord by the hand of Moses" was the Deuteronomic code, and an entirely new book: that it was accepted by Hilkiah and Josiah because it supplied a clear and practical scheme of reformation on the prophetic lines, and gathered up the new Divine teaching given to Israel under Hezekiah and Isaiah. That it was not a forgery of Hilkiah or the temple priests, because it was against their interests: that how or by whom it was written and how it got into the Temple library is of no consequence! By the help of this theory he explains many difficulties, and seeks to reconcile inconsistent details in the history and prophets.

But we must say no difficulty he thus solves can be so great as the one he imposes on our belief. Granting that Isaiah did not know this special book of the law (which resting as it does mainly on negative evidence, does not appear quite clear), that is no proof at all it was not in existence. The Deuteronomic code thus found in the temple, and at once recognized as "the law of the Lord by Moses"; declares almost in every section that it was, in the first instance, both spoken and written by Moses; Chapters vii., viii., ix., and others are prophecies of, and directions for, their imminent conquest of Canaan. See besides Deut. i. 1—8; iv. 1, 2, &c.; v.; xi. 2—12; xiii. 18; xxix.; xxxi.

Again going backwards still near 200 years, we find in the history of Jehoshaphat that he sent his princes to teach in the cities of Judah. "And they taught in Judah, and "had the book of the law of the Lord with them." He also brought about a reformation in the administration of justice, in accordance with the civil law of Moses as we now have it: though it is noted of his reformation that it did not extend thoroughly to the religious services and ritual of the people.

Then the early history of Israel, as related in the Pentateuch, is referred to by the prophets contemporary with Hezekiah, and the fact that their law was given by God through Moses is taken for granted, in a way which shows this must have been at that time familiarly known or believed. And this is equally true of the earliest Psalms, as of the latest. The same faith, the same spiritual worship is taught throughout the book of Psalms, which still serve the Christian church as the expression of their deepest and highest needs.

What then is the latest date we can give to the sub-

If these things were thus written after the time of Isaiah, the book was distinctly and deliberately a forgery, and that of the most flagrant character:—the forger insisting, with a singular impudence, "Ye shall "not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish "ought from it" (iv. 2 ; xii. 32).

That this law, and the Levitical ritual, was not observed in its full strictness, even by the prophets and saints, cannot in face of any positive evidence for the authorship of Moses, be accepted as final. In estimating the weight of evidence, you must distinguish carefully between what is positive, and what is negative. It is certain the prophets speak at times of sacrifices and burnt offerings in a very slighting manner, difficult to reconcile with the importance attached to them in the law. But at times also they attribute to them a sacredness, which needs reconciling with themselves. But it is clear much has yet to be done before we get a reliable criticism of the Old Testament.

stance of that law, and to the history in which it lies so singularly embedded? Consider the records at the time we know they are authentic, and go back from that date; the whole history brims over with references to the divine origin of the law, and to the peculiar primeval relations of the nation to God, in a manner too natural, too unintentional, too incidental, to be reconciled with the idea of its being a human invention of later date. And this is true till we come to Samuel in the 11th century before Christ and 350 years after the death of Moses*. As to the theory that Samuel invented the law Mr Vaughan says†, "No man, however great, can make his nation accept a fictitious history of itself, or persuade it that it had long ago received, and always possessed a code of national laws. He must build on existing tradition."

And here we may note, that if we take the general result of modern research in reference to the earliest history of historical races, it tends clearly to confirm the general truthfulness of traditional history, and to discredit that school of historical criticism which, throwing aside traditions, sought to construct a new history on logical or philosophical principles. But if we must have a philosophical history, then the traditional portion of Bible history—that contained in Genesis—affords us so natural and so adequate an account of the early religious condition and education of Israel, as proved by their historic faith, worship, and law, that by the light of it the unique phenomenon they present to us becomes wholly intelligible; without it, it is really inexplicable. But the Scrip-

* See *e.g.* the speech of 'the man of God' to Eli, 1 Samuel ii 27—30; xii. 6—15; xxi. 4—6; 2 Sam. vi.; vii. 2—7, 23. 1 Kings ii. 3; viii. 1—11, 16, 23; and 31 to 31; compared with Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xxviii. &c.

† *Our Christian Hope.*

ture histories from the time of Abraham are too graphic and too exact, to be classed with merely traditional, still less with merely legendary histories: their internal evidence is strongly suggestive of their being contemporary records, or nearly contemporary.

Another test of trustworthiness, is that afforded by contemporary literature. This brings in independent, and often incidental and unintentional witness as to the historical facts in question. And this we have, not in an unbroken series, but in an abundance no other ancient history can boast of, from several wholly distinct sources.

i. The writings of Moses give us "a key to the meaning of many ancient traditions current among the heathen, though greatly disguised: such as the golden age: the Garden of the Hesperides: the fruit tree in the middle of the garden, guarded by the Dragon, the rainbow which Jupiter set in the cloud as the sign to men. The flood destroying all but two righteous persons," which is a tradition among nearly all nations; and the seventh day as a sacred day which is almost equally common; "all conspiring to establish the reality of the facts which Moses relates by showing that vestiges of the like present themselves in the traditional history of the world at large."

ii. For the history of Genesis up to the time of Abraham we have the literature of Babylon as copied by the Assyrians. For the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness there is the evidence now coming in of the desert legends, graves, and names.

iii. The history is corroborated by the independent literature of the Psalms and Prophets. "Both the history and law of the Pentateuch are referred to as continually by these writers, as we refer to the common facts of our national law and history." I must refer you for this last

very important class of evidence to Prof. Blunt's work*, and can only sum it up here by his conclusion: i. e. that there is no rational way of accounting for the multitude of the unintentional coincidences and exact references contained in these non-historical books, when compared with the records, except on the supposition that the history is true.

The literature of the Babylonish tablets is so nearly identical with that of Genesis, that it demonstrates the identity of the source of the two†, and affords incidentally a pretty clear indication as to the date when the Hebrews possessed these traditions.

The earliest of these records were Babylonish: their literature ceased after B.C. 1500, or about the time of the Exodus from Egypt. The Assyrian records found at Nineveh, recommence about B.C. 990 (in the reign of Solomon). The present known copies were made by the son of Esarhaddon for his library at Nineveh, B.C. 673 or 626 or in the days of Manasseh and Josiah.

Then as for the identity of the history. The principal story of the Creation in six days given in the tablets, agrees substantially so far as it is complete with Genesis. The week divides the Assyrian time; the very word 'Sabbath' is used in these tablets, and is explained as 'a day of 'peace,' or 'completion of labour;' "a day on which work "is unlawful," "a day of rest for the heart." Both records give the same locality for the garden of Eden, using almost the same name; two of the rivers named are identical, and Elam is called "the country of the four rivers." The tree of life, guarded on either side by a winged cherub, is one of the most common emblems on the Babylonian gems and bas-reliefs: an early Babylonian cylinder gives this sacred tree

* *Unintentional Coincidences*: by Prof. Blunt.

† *The Chaldean Genesis*.

with a man seated on either side and a serpent behind one of them. Some even of the actual phrases found in Genesis are found also in the tablets; and several of the Patriarchal names of Genesis, both before and after the flood, occur in the tablets frequently as gods. The history of the flood, and generally its localities are the same; especially they agree in making it a punishment for the wickedness of men. The sin of the builders of the tower of Babel and their punishment is recorded in a Babylonish fragment; "to confound their speeches he set his face, he gave the commandment, he made strange their counsel." We find the dates derived from these records differ from those computed by ourselves from the Bible genealogies, and at the same time we learn why these data have misled us. It is clear from the tablets that those ancient nations gave the name of 'son,' not only to grandchildren but to still remoter generations, passing over the intervening names without notice. The Assyrian tablets appear to give the date 4700 B.C. to the deluge; thus adding above a 1000 years to the period elapsing between Noah and Abraham: this presents no real difficulty.

Thus the fact that the Jews brought these histories from Babylonia is almost certain: the question at what time they received them becomes a very simple one, as there are only two channels, and two dates possible.

They may have received them from Abraham. We know that he was born in Ur, on the banks of the Euphrates, and the capital of the earliest Accadian dynasty with which we are acquainted. He himself was one of the Semitic race, "who settling among the dark-skinned Accadians and adopting their culture and civilization, finally overcame and supplanted them. The facts; 1st "that the father of the Hebrew race migrated from Ur,

"where the Babylonian tablets show these histories were known, to Harran, and thence to Palestine: 2nd that the history of Genesis up to his time is concerned with the history and the country of the Assyrians: and from and after his time with that of Palestine and the countries in its immediate vicinity," so clearly tend to indicate that he brought those earlier histories and delivered them to his sons*, that if we reject this idea, we ought to give some substantial explanation why he failed to do so, in the face of such testimony to his character as that of Gen. xviii. 19.

Unless the Hebrews learnt them from Abraham, the want of any further possible communication with Babylonia till after the time of David, nearly therefore 500 years after the Babylonian literature ceased; would force us to conclude they learned them from the Nineveh copies; of which those we know are dated 673 B.C. The first intercourse between Israel and the revived Assyrian kingdom dates about 950, the time of Benhadad's invasion thirty years after Solomon's death: the improbability of their learning these traditions from enemies and mere casual invaders is so obvious, that we should have to postpone their reception till the time of the Assyrian captivity at the earliest, 720 B.C.†.

It is not necessary for our present purpose, to go into the discussion of the Elohist and Jehovist narratives of this portion of Scripture. That the early portion of Genesis, in its present form, is a collection of distinct traditions or narratives; which, like the Assyrian inscriptions, had existed at first as oral traditions, and were then collected and written, probably at different times; is no

* *The Chaldean Genesis*, chap. 17, Conclusion.

† 2 Kings xviii. 9—12.

proof of its untrustworthiness. The Bible account of the matter is that the name Jehovah was first revealed to Moses; and hence histories containing that name must have been edited by Moses or those who followed him. But the fact of which Prof. R. Smith informs us, that the Psalms xlii. to lxxxix. form a single 'Elohistic collection' consisting of two sets of Levitical and one of Davidic Psalms, is a significant warning that the Name of God used by the writer, cannot determine the date of the writing: for the same writer here uses the early name in some compositions, the later in others. We cannot assume that an editor would never do the same.

The Geographical and Archæological evidences which have recently come to light, bear strong testimony to the truthfulness of the Scripture histories. Foremost amongst these are the discoveries made by the officers of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Whether we turn to the walls of Solomon's temple—with the Zidonian letters carved on the stones to mark how they were to fit into one another,—thus showing they were prepared at a distance from the spot,—and the marvellous skill displayed in the workmanship, all minutely verifying the account we have of its building: or to the identification of the sites named in Genesis, in Joshua, Judges, Samuel, &c.—at once by the scene itself exactly answering to the brief but graphic Scripture account, and by the names they still bear, proving in so many cases to be only the modern form of the ancient Scripture name—all these are proofs of that kind of accuracy which marks accurate and contemporaneous history. The general objective truth of Homer's Iliad, and of the kind of civilization and social life he describes, has been strengthened by Dr Schliemann's discoveries, yet the exact site of Troy is still disputed, and

Homer's scenery is evidently incorrect: he puts hills and rivers in the wrong places, as an old historian writing far from the actual spot was sure to do. This is not the case with the Bible localities and scenery: the description is brief and purely incidental, and yet it minutely answers to the actual spot as determined by these skilled explorers. A great Egyptian scholar tells us, that the ancient tombs and monuments of Egypt of the age of Rameses and his dynasty, "show that the condition of Egypt as it is "incidentally described in Genesis and Exodus, the chief "cities of the frontier, the armies, are true of that age; "but are not correct of the age of the Pharaohs contemporary with Solomon, or his successors."

To estimate the critical value of this kind of evidence, we need only take account of the arguments against the authenticity of the Scripture narratives, built upon the supposed discrepancy between the history and the country in which it was supposed to have happened.

One instance of this was told us at a meeting of the Palestine Exploration Fund held here. The writer of Supernatural religion, bound to prove our Gospel history was not contemporaneous, had to show its inaccuracy. One of his instances was the mention of the baptisms at Bethabara*: he said this was a fictitious place and could not exist on the Jordan, a deep and rapid stream between high banks. Before the book was out of the press word came home from the officers, they had found the exact spot; that it has a ford, that it exactly fits into the narrative which so cursorily mentions it—that it still bears the same name in its modern form.

The now well-known view from Mount Nebo, recorded in the last chapter of Deuteronomy, is another instance.

* John i. 28, see Revised Version.

What sent Dr Tristram there, at considerable risk, was Dr Colenso's assertion that the scene was imaginary: there is no mountain in that region high enough to show the Mediterranean sea, and some other places named, for higher mountain ranges intervene: and Carmel which from its height *must* have been visible, is not named. All this is self-evident—on the map. But Dr Tristram, going there with four chance companions, read over with them that chapter on the summit, and identified every place named. They found also the places not named,—Mount Carmel notably,—were not visible, a much lower but nearer hill conceals it. The sea itself they did not see, but through an opening in the hills they saw “the unmistakeable haze of the sea,” and that on a clearer day it would be visible. The conclusion they came to was, that whoever wrote that chapter must have been on the very spot. And it is almost certain Joshua attended Moses in his ascent of Nebo.

Again Colenso, writing in Natal, demonstrated the descriptions given by the spies to Moses, of the south and hill country of Judea to be mythical, and the subsequent mention of the vast armies sent out by Judah, grossly exaggerated. Instead of being a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of vineyards and olives, supporting its hundreds of thousands; it is a waste, barren land, of bare rocks, without trees or even bushes; in many parts without any soil at all on the hill sides, in the rest producing a scanty pasturage for the flocks of a few wandering Arabs. Moreover there is no early and latter rain: it falls once a year and that in such torrents as must effectually prevent any accumulation of soil on the hill sides. Well Dr Tristram said, “we did not reason about it, we went to “see:” and they found Colenso's description absolutely accurate. They found also something more; they could

hardly go a mile in any direction without coming on the foundations of some ancient town or village, generally large enough for about one thousand inhabitants, and walled round: every such village had somewhere near its gates an ancient oil press: and scarce a barren ledge of rock on the hill side but had the traces of a wine press. The change has not been miraculous: the long wars, especially the Saracenic wars so devastated the country that all terrace cultivation was stopped, the trees were all cut down, the fertilizing rain ceased. About the same time the report came from missionaries in Palestine that the former and latter rains of Scripture appear to be returning,—a second season of rain had partially occurred, and promised to restore the fertility of the land.

Fresh evidence of this kind has been pouring in every year, and now forms a considerable literature of its own. The recent explorations of the Sinaitic Peninsula, have shown the most exact accordance between Exodus and the existing topographical facts; Mr Holland's researches identify nearly every spot: "his discovery of a labyrinth of valleys, "slopes, roads, and hilly country in the north of the desert "of Tih, in the region just south of Kadesh Barnea, solves "the difficulties connected with the protracted sojourn of "a vast host in this region.—Three days' journey east of "Sinai, Prof. Palmer came upon the camp and grave "mounds of Kibroth Hattaavah*. The Arab legend about "these still is, that they are the remains of a vast pilgrim "caravan, which pitched here ages ago, and was afterwards "lost in the desert of Tih. One day's journey further "Hazereth was found, bearing the same name still" and so on. There are three facts concerning this whole mass of evidence I would suggest for your fuller consideration.

* *i. e.* "The graves of lust." Leviticus x. 33; xi.

First. Its amazing variety. The histories contained in the Bible stretch over 4 or 5000 years: the testing evidence comes to us from wholly independent sources, and from every country concerned, or alluded to in those histories: from Babylon and Nineveh, from the Giant cities of Bashan, from Syria and Palestine, the plains of Egypt and the deserts of Arabia, the cities of Asia Minor, the Catacombs of Rome. Both as to places and times it tests the Bible narrative at points all along its course.

Secondly. That in this whole mass of evidence, not one actual fact has come to light, impeaching the accuracy of our historians. Had they not been accurate, with that accuracy which comes from eye-witness alone, they must have been found in error on some point or other.

Lastly. This kind of evidence is strictly modern. No writer at the time when we know the Bible was completed in its present form, had any conception of these checks on oral or written testimony, of these modern tests of historical accuracy, and therefore could not have invented them. There is in nearly all these histories, and most notably perhaps in the more ancient—that “local colouring,” which a simple narrative written by an eye-witness is sure to have; but which, as a work of art, is an invention of the present century. It is found, as we have seen, in the graphic incidental mention of the localities named; it is found equally in the life and manners described. Take for instance Deuteronomy; it professes to be a record of the last addresses of Moses to the people whom he had led out of Egypt, to whom he had delivered the law, with whom he had wandered forty years in the wilderness. The book as a whole answers exactly to the character and offices of Moses. “We find it full of reminiscences of experience which are common to the speaker and the

"hearers, too characteristic to be overlooked, too natural and persistent to have been invented. The patriot and legislator speaks there in almost every line, no less than the bearer of the law and messenger of Jehovah. There are addresses which were actually delivered, and written down by the scribe, who added the 31st chapter. The candour of the speaker, telling of his own want of eloquence and of faith, of Aaron's idolatry and Miriam's sin and punishment are signs of his truthfulness*." "Such a representation of Moses is intelligible as proceeding from Moses himself; but what in him was humility, would have been obtuseness in an annalist, such as is not found in the accounts of other great men, nor in the notices of Moses in subsequent books†."

"There is abundant evidence to show that though the main bulk of the Pentateuch is Mosaic, certain detached portions are of later growth," Canon Perowne says‡. The natural explanation of this is to attribute these isolated passages to editorial additions, or marginal notes placed by subsequent transcribers in the text. The tradition of the Jews is that Ezra thus edited the law. The other alternative is the hypothesis of Kuenen; i.e. that the writer of the Pentateuch living about the time of the Babylonian captivity, "has been endeavouring to throw himself back into remote antiquity and produce a document that should appear to belong to the age of Moses;" and that he should do this, "and reproduce first the patriarchal and then the Mosaic customs and manners with such fidelity, that lynx-eyed modern critics can find

* "Deuteronomy and its Critics," *Church Quarterly Review*, Oct. 1877.

† *Speaker's Commentary*.

‡ *Dictionary of the Bible*. Such passages as Exod. xvi. 35, (compare Joshua v. 12,) are of this class.

"nothing to object to, contains in itself a greater anachronism than any other that can be named, and more entirely "alien to the spirit of the age to which it is assigned*."

We may say then without fear of contradiction, that the history of the Old Testament possesses every evidence requisite to give it authority as a trustworthy and accurate history, which has ever been demanded of any other ancient record; and that in far greater abundance and of far more variety than we actually possess for any other history before the time of Christ. And referring to our rules of evidence, that we must ask for that kind of evidence the subject admits of, for that amount of evidence which in this matter it is possible to obtain†, we may fairly claim that both these conditions are here fulfilled. And we pass on to the next point: Has it every mark necessary to authenticate it, as the record of direct revelations from God?

We have already touched upon some of these marks. The tone of the whole of the Old Testament is unlike any merely human history ever written. Its books tell us indeed of great deeds done by great men amongst the people; but the work and the workmen are always God's gift. They are records of the sins of the people and their chastisements, of God's great goodness and their own great wickedness. Suppose them written by the priestly tribe—they record their sins and unfaithfulness more minutely than those of the rest. They certainly do not flatter their kings. Obviously from style and language, as well as from that constant reference backwards, these books were written at different dates; but they all uphold the same high standard, refer to the same Divine

* Quoted in "Deut. and its Critics," *Ch. Quart. Review*, Oct. 1877.

† Part 1, Lecture 2, page 32.

Authority and are unlike any other books in the world*.

But the religious conceptions, and the whole social economy, the standard of justice and morality, and the civil and criminal law of Moses, are not only far above those of any other nation before the Christian era, they more than equal in fundamental principles any code of any Christian nation now. So that it has been said by a free-thinking philosopher, that a modern code of laws will be righteous and beneficent, in proportion as it approaches the Mosaic standard. Hence the argument that Israel could not have had the law of Moses before the return from the captivity, because the history shows how far they fell short of its ideal in practice, loses much of its weight. The revelations given them were educational—necessarily therefore on the one hand accommodated to their slowness of heart and understanding, and on the other, above their practice. Yet these books prove how far they were above all contemporary nations. The first difference we note is that the whole of this early literature is penetrated with a sense of the individual and personal value of men as men, which is absolutely wanting in all non-Christian literature, or law†. This key note is struck in the first chapter of Genesis. That man was created in the image of God is the root idea of the New Testament, and anticipates the whole development of man as a true person, with his attributes, his rights, his hopes. Canon Mozley points out that here we have the whole truth, which had to combat with the half truth that possessed the whole ancient world—that men are only parts of and belong to each other. “In the early ages, in the East, in Greece and in

* See *Our Christian Hope*, Lecture 4, p. 188.

† See Canon Mozley's lectures on the Old Testament.

"Rome, there was no conception of man's inalienable right to himself and his own life: he was only part of another; the children and wives to the father, all sons to the head of the family; all to the Sovereign*." In the Old Testament, this whole truth is unfolded gradually: when we come to the Psalms we find it in full possession. There we have the individual soul speaking face to face with God, pleading directly with Him as being His, and His alone, not as man's. And this which is the true source and sign of human worth is the foundation of the whole law†.

"Then again the inveterate idea of the old world, was that the masses must be kept in ignorance; that truth is the privilege of a very few, who are bound to keep it a profound secret from the profane. But in Israel one whole tribe is set apart to teach the whole nation from children." Remember how carefully they were charged, when any new religious rite was ordained, to explain the meaning of it to their children. And again of the whole law and revelation "the words I command thee this day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way"—thou shalt write them on the posts of thy house and on thy gates." Nor were these truths to be kept to their own nation: any foreigner may come and dwell among them, learn their sacred law, enter into their covenant, and share in their most sacred rites.

Their civil laws were consistent with this root idea, and equally beyond those of other nations. "Other eastern nations existed only to swell the barbaric pomp of eastern

* See Canon Mozley's lectures on the Old Testament.

† Something of this is also to be found in Buddhism, in its purer and earlier writings.

"despots, had no corporate life, no individual rights. In the midst of these Israel was a free community, existing for the good of all the nation. They had indeed a federal constitution, and each city and village seems to have possessed a municipal magistracy*. When they chose a king he was still under the Theocracy, subject to God's law, commanded and rebuked by God's law." Contrast Ahab's confessed powerlessness to purchase Naboth's vineyard without his free consent, with the despotic powers of Syrian and Assyrian monarchs. Compare Moses' criminal law with other eastern codes, as with those of Persia or Assyria,—with Manu's Indian laws in respect both of cruelty, and distinctions of class†. Moses knew no distinction.

Compare Moses' law for slaves with those of Greece and Rome: his law of marriage and parental rights with those of Rome. His laws for the protection of women and children with our own.

And note this also; "It is just those parts of the law which seem the least likely to be the silent growth of

* Deut. xix. 11, 13; xxv. 7—9; xxi. 18—21. Ruth iv. 2. Judges viii. 14. 1 Sam. xvi. 4. 1 Kings xxi. 11. 2 Kings x. 1.

† The cruelty of their punishments as related by Rollin, make it impossible to quote them. The distinctions of class are more marked in the Indian codes.

"Should a once born man through arrogance instruct a Brahmin, saying you ought to do so and so, let the king order boiling oil to be poured into his mouth and ears." Manu's law, quoted by Canon Mozley.

"If a low born man mention the name of a superior revilingly, an iron pin ten inches long red hot, shall be thrust into his mouth."—*Institutes of Vishnu*.

Mention is made of "the place appointed for torturing those who have killed a Brahmin." If a Brahmin commits murder, he is to be blinded, by a cloth tied over his eyes.

A king must never kill a Brahmin, though found guilty of all possible crimes: he may be banished, &c.

"natural causes—its general spirit of justice and mercy to men,—of liberty, fraternity and equality among the members of the commonwealth—are those which give the key to the Prophetic writings. The prophets are emphatically in the best sense men of the people, as truly as they are men of God...All these points of their teaching are strong indications of the existence among them of a political ideal, far too high and holy to have been created by circumstances." Where did they learn it? "All is explained if we accept the historic truth of the mission and legislation of Moses, and the guidance of the national history by God. All seems inexplicable without some such originating and sustaining cause*."

Even more conspicuously is the religious faith and worship of Israel exalted above that of any contemporary race. Amongst these, worshippers of brute gods as Dagon and Moloch, and offerers of human sacrifices, "we find," Canon Mozley writes, "a whole people worshipping God under no form, but in His own pure essence as expressed in the name 'Jehovah' the 'I am'; merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth: keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. We find them learning to worship God in such hymns as that of Moses (Exodus xv.), 'Who is like unto Thee, O Jehovah, among the mighty ones, Glorious in Holiness?' and then in such Psalms as viii, xxxiii, lxiii, ciii,—still more than adequate for the highest Christian conceptions of praise." "Elsewhere," as Mr Vaughan says, "these great truths were dimly seen"—and that at a later period† "by a few of the wisest and best. To the mass of

* *Our Christian Hope*, page 187.

† As in *Æschylus* about B.C. 480, *Socrates* and *Plato* a little later.

"mankind they were obscured by an enormous cloud of gross and often very immoral superstition :.in Israel they were the common heritage of every man, woman, and child. How can we explain the fact that the whole of this otherwise insignificant people stood, in this respect, upon a level which no kindred people of the Semitic, none of the Indo-European race approached?" Quite clearly it is not to be explained as the natural growth of the Hebrew mind. If they had a national characteristic, it was their almost unrestrainable desire for idol worship.

"Thus date the open promulgation of this religion and law when we will,—and it cannot be dated later than some age previous to Samuel: it stands out so far above any other religious belief and any other political constitution, that it proves the Israelitish people were under a peculiar training, had a different history and a higher education than any other nation had."

"Chemists tell us," says another writer, "that those meteoric stones which now and then amaze us by tumbling from the sky, contain compounds which, being devoid of water, could not have been formed within our atmosphere. They carry in their inmost structure the proof of their unearthly origin. In like manner if we find in the Bible moral ideas so unique, so unlike what the rest of literature (except as influenced by the Bible) can furnish, that the human mind is not competent to have originated them; we have good reason to conclude they proceed from some superhuman mind. This persuasion will be strongly confirmed when we find these ideas not lying disjointed, one in one book one in another; but pervading many if not all the books of Scripture, Jewish and Christian, displaying an organised develop-

“ment, and standing to one another in systematic relation*.”

And this brings us to the last series of evidences which must establish the authenticity of the divine Revelations contained in the Old Testament. These consist mainly in the inseparable unity of the Old and New Testament revelations, comparable to nothing less than the living unity between the seed and the full-grown vine,—the infant and the man.

Every revelation intended for mankind must be recorded in an authentic and adequate document: and if it be a progressive revelation or unveiling, it must be thus recorded during its progress, at each epoch. It must be directly on its entrance into the world understood essentially;—but it cannot be understood with completeness, in its relation to the whole, until the whole be completed: therefore, says Röthe, the earlier can only be completely intelligible when the later and the latest are given. Clearly it follows from this that the Old Testament dispensation would not be completely understood in all the fulness of its meaning, until after the death and resurrection of our Lord and the pouring-out of the Spirit foretold by the prophets†. All the worship of the Old Testament economy stood in typical relation to Christ, and was typically prophetic of Him. The pious Jews themselves knew this to some extent. Clearly all these portions, assuming them to be authentic revelations, would be far better and more fully understood when the

* *The Basis of Faith*, Lect. vii., § 3, Rev. E. R. Conder, D.D.

† As Isaiah xxxii. 15—18; xliv. 3—8; xlii. 1—4; lxi. 1—3; Ezekiel xxxvi. 25—27; xxxvii.; Joel ii. 28, 29; Zech. xii. 10; all partly fulfilled at Pentecost and still being fulfilled, whilst passing on into the future for their consummation.

types and prophecies had received their historic fulfilment. And conversely, these later revelations would be at first understood by the aid of the preceding ones and established in the minds of believers on that foundation.

And this is precisely what did take place, when the Christian revelation began: this is an unquestionable historical fact.

“As regards the Redeemer,” R  the says, “no one can
“for an instant fail to perceive, that to Him the Old Testa-
“ment economy is, in the strictest sense, the Divine Reve-
“lation: and the Old Testament Scripture, the testimony
“of that Revelation;—a testimony which He reverences
“with the warmest religious piety; in which He continually
“lives with His whole soul, as within a sanctuary, and
“which He uses as His chiefest instrument throughout
“His teaching activity.—I say confidently with Lechler,
“whoever makes the experiment of going through the
“discourses in the Gospels, with special attention to the
“references to the Scriptures, obtains a very strong impres-
“sion not only how frequently, but with what emphasis
“Jesus points to the Old Testament Scriptures, and how
“variously He uses their words in the most manifold
“bearings.” “His discourses raise it above doubt—not
“only that their words, even to details, were always present
“and familiar to Him: but also that He had lived down
“perfectly into their inmost being, into their spirit, into
“the great religious and moral ideas which pervade and
“govern them; and therefore assumed the freest attitude
“as to their letter. Hence proceeds the peculiar spirituality
“of His manner of treating them, standing at once and
“equally, within and above them.” “The further He
“entered into their Sanctuary*, the more abundantly and

* See Luke ii. 43—52.

“powerfully did the references to Himself and His office force themselves upon Him. ‘Search the Scriptures,—‘they testify of Me’ was His challenge to the Jewish teachers. And so considerable a portion of His teaching and arguments is built upon them, it is clear that the Redeemer found them in complete harmony with His own work, and with that Revelation of the Father which He came to give. At the same time the strictness with which He confines Himself to the canonical Scriptures of the Old Testament, is characteristically striking; withholding Himself from any of the ideas belonging merely to the schools and sects of the Judaism of His day*.”

Then we find the first gift of Christ to His apostles after His resurrection was this, “He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.” And we find that the apostles, turning back on the old familiar Scriptures the new light of Christ’s words and works, found them also full of a new light; “found everywhere,” as Röhre says, “a many-voiced echo from the Old Testament of their fast-rooted Christian convictions.” In proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to the world, orally and in writings, they found both the Old Testament dispensation and its records in complete harmony with the message of Christ; they knew it was the same unchanging God Who spoke in times past to their fathers by the prophets; Who spoke in their own day in and through His Son; Who was speaking by His Holy Spirit in themselves, according to the promise of Christ.

The teaching of St Paul, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of St Peter, is clear on this point. They claimed for the prophets of old the same inspiration, from the same source

* See e.g. Matt. v. 21 to end, Mark vii. 13.

which Christ had promised, and was giving continually, to themselves. "Prophecy came not at any time by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost."

"What a magnificent idea then," writes Maurice, "must St Paul have had of those books, which in his Pharisaical days had seemed to him objects of fear, and a kind of worship. How every old teacher will have started into life, when he contemplated him not as the utterer of dark sayings which the scribes copied and made darker, but as endued with the same Divine Spirit Who enabled him to be a teacher of the Gentiles, Who dwelt with every Church, Who made every Christian His Temple.—What a grand procession those old teachers formed, leading men onwards to that discovery of the Inspirer. What in all the world could compare to them—in their continuity, their orderly succession, their harmony, their worth as witnesses to the Divine Government in their own day, a method which must be the same in all generations to come; their worth as foreseers of that which had now come to pass?"

And every careful student of the two Testaments can observe this unity for himself. If you construct the character, the offices and the history of the Messiah out of the Old Testament records, you will find it harmonizes in every general feature and in many details with the Christ of the Gospels. And you will find in these passages a light thrown upon the inner mind and the human heart of the Saviour, which will enable you to enter far more deeply into His memoirs in the New Testament. The account St Peter gives of these prophetic writings is thus verified in our own experience. He says that the "prophets who prophesied of the grace of salvation that should come

“unto us, sought and searched diligently what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point to, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them. To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you did they minister.” Now is it not a simple matter of fact, that these passages of the Old Testament do minister to us to this day, as they have ministered to believers from St Peter’s time, a fuller knowledge of the Saviour’s inner mind and divinely-human heart? Does not the fifty-third of Isaiah minister to us a fuller comprehension of the character of Christ’s life and death, of the significance of His humiliation? Does not that twenty-second Psalm minister to us, when it lets us look into the very heart of our Redeemer on the Cross, and into His Satisfaction in beholding the ever-widening domains of the salvation won for men by the travails of His Soul?

And this is a fact which cannot be got rid of by any “scientific rules of interpretation” whatever. Science never gets rid of a single fact, what it gets rid of and for ever rejects, is every rule and every theory that is contradicted by a single fact. Grant that nothing could be, beforehand, more utterly improbable than that Isaiah should write a brief memoir of Jesus Christ. That improbability entirely ceases and is done away with, when the fact comes up that he did write it. How he came to write it is to be explained by some theory of inspiration; but the fact that it was written remains, whether it is explicable or not.

Without then insisting on any specific theory of inspiration, it appears evident that the Old Testament, both in itself and as the essential foundation of the Christian Revelation, is such a book as cannot be referred either to mere human wisdom and foresight, or to chance. To

affirm that it can be, is to affirm it to be an unnatural and therefore impossible prodigy. It would turn the Bible from a superhuman into a miraculous book, and that a miracle without any adequate or efficient cause. This is the class of prodigy which science binds us to deny. Nor can any amount of errors in numbers, in dates, in editing, in copying, were these as numerous as they are in fact unimportant, at all affect the legitimate conclusion. The superhuman foresight and unity of this book demand a Superhuman Inspirer and Director: the divine life-sustaining power of the book demands a Divine Author.

LECTURE XII.

THE NEW TESTAMENT RECORDS.

"The Bible like the Church gains fresh force and strength in times of trial. As long as it is unassailed it is also in a great measure unstudied."

No portion of the whole controversy in which we are engaged affords to the Christian a more convincing example of the might with which God's silent Providence is overruling the attacks of sceptics, to confirm the faith of the Churches, and to compel them to grow in knowledge; than does the storm which in these modern days has raged against the books of the sacred Canon. We have seen several instances of this in the verification of the Old Testament chronicles, in the course of enquiries set on foot in consequence of the denials of their veracity by theorists. We shall find still more striking examples in examining the results of the attack on the New Testament records: for now in God's Providence it has come to pass that these books, and especially the Gospels, have been subjected to a more searching criticism and examination than any other writings on any other subject have ever received; so that we have more evidence from which to judge in their case, than for any other early books. In speaking to you of the

results of the critical and historical evidence that has been thus accumulated, I can only indicate the principal chains of evidence, and give samples rather than summaries of evidences and arguments that fill the world.—The questions specially before us to-day are these,

1. Do the New Testament books give us contemporaneous evidence as to what the apostles taught? 2. What evidence have we as to the continuity of Christian faith and doctrine from the time of Christ's death? 3. Do the Gospels give us substantially the authentic evidence of eye-witnesses of the events they record, or of their contemporaries?

Remember, these questions must be decided without prejudice from their bearing on that other question, Whether any evidence can substantiate miraculous or supernatural occurrences? The authenticity of a document rests on evidence of certain facts, which are in no way affected by our opinion as to the credibility of miracles. And hence, as one of our critical teachers has said, "it is only Christian believers who can afford to criticise the sacred writings freely and fully, and to deal with them exactly as with any ancient books of the same mixed character, by the received rules of criticism. The more certain we are that this book is God's book, the more certain we are that it will stand every true test that the truest human books can stand."

Objectors to the miraculous come to the question of the authenticity of these records, weighted by the necessity they are under of explaining how the supernatural events related got into them. The chief hypothesis now is, that all which is supernatural in the Gospel History and the Christian creed, especially the facts of the Trinity, of the Incarnation and the Resurrection of our Lord, and the

sending the Spirit—all this is due to the mythical growth of superstition excited by our Lord's remarkable life and death, and crusting over in course of time the real and fragmentary traditions of His human history.

Now in order to establish the possibility of such an origin of our histories, it is necessary to show that the New Testament records were not contemporaneous; for if they record myths they must have been written when there had been time for myths to grow; and these cannot grow up and be received generally, during the lifetime of the eye-witnesses. If, on the other hand, these miracles and doctrines were later interpolations into earlier histories; the records we have must at least show such marks of interpolation, as that it would be possible to have narratives of some sort after leaving all these out.

Our first question then will be, What is the earliest undisputed date at which these alleged superhuman facts are known to have been taught, received, and believed, in the Churches of Christ? On this point the author of *Supernatural Religion* boldly asserts that, "We have no contemporaneous history at all, as to what the first promulgators of Christianity actually asserted."

In beginning this enquiry, we have to bear in mind those points, concerning which all, believing and unbelieving critics alike, are now agreed:—

i. As to the reality and greatness of the Life, Character, and Death of our Lord.

ii. That the apostles and first promulgators of Christianity were not deceivers, but honestly taught concerning Him what they themselves believed.

iii. That St Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians, the Galatians, and the Romans, are certainly genuine, were composed by St Paul, and addressed to the Churches whose

names they bear*. That all this, denied by the Deists of the last century, is fully admitted now, is one fruit of modern criticism.

Now in reference to our first question, what is the undisputed date at which these fundamental but Supernatural facts were taught and received in the Christian Churches, the contents of these unquestioned epistles is decisive. There is no doubt whatever that St Paul wrote them, "there is not much uncertainty as to the date at which they were written. The most extreme opinions fix them between A.D. 52—59; that is, under no circumstances more than 30 years after the Lord's death"; the earliest possible date of our Lord's death being A.D. 30.

The martyrdom of St Stephen took place in 37; the conversion of St Paul, the history of which is briefly given in his Epistle to the Galatians, took place probably late in the same year; certainly not more than a year later. This epistle begins with affirming the Resurrection of Christ; in it St Paul calls Christ "the Son of God"; and says that the covenant made with Abraham was confirmed of God in Christ, 430 years before the law was given: "that God sent forth His Son, made of a woman"; and "has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts†."

In the First Epistle to the Corinthians is contained the most complete account we have of the bodily appearances of the risen Saviour. St Paul writes in it, that he had preached the Gospel of the Resurrection of Christ to them, from the first, that the other apostles had preached it; that the Corinthians themselves had received it, and still stood in that faith; "by which also ye are saved‡." All this

* See Canon Westcott's *Gospel of the Resurrection*, chap. I., § 46.

† Gal. i. 1; ii. 20; iii. 17; iv. 4, 5, 6, written A.D. 58.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. A.D. 57. 2 Cor. A.D. 58.

he speaks of as matters of notoriety to them. "On this there is no trace of disagreement; some indeed questioned the reality of our own resurrection, but they were met by arguments based on the resurrection of Christ which they acknowledged." He reminds them that if the fact of Christ's resurrection were not true, he had no Gospel at all for them; they were still unredeemed, and had no hope but that of the baser Epicureans—"let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." In the Epistle to the Romans, written certainly before St Paul went to Rome as a prisoner, and within twenty-eight years after Christ's death, he founds all his exhortations to them upon their "knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more." And again he writes, "for to this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that He might be the Lord of the dead and of the living." The Divine nature of Christ is as plainly stated in the eighth chapter as in any creed of the Church now: and the personal work of the Holy Spirit is affirmed here, as in each of these four epistles*.

It is not even pretended that any one of these passages is an interpolation of a later date. Take them all away, and both the argument and the construction fall to pieces: you have literally nothing left but a set of half-propositions, arranged with no sort of connection.

Nor is it possible to attribute these statements to the result of "the Pauline teaching." On these points at any rate it is impossible to sustain any such distinction between his teaching and that of the other apostles. For it was not St Paul who founded the Church of Rome; we do not know which of the first promulgators of Christianity did found it. But we do know that in A.D. 58 it was already

* Rom. viii. 16, 26—27; 1 Cor. xii.; Gal. v. and vi.

a considerable Church, and that St Paul, appealing confidently to "the mutual faith both of you and me*," proceeds to exhort both its Jew and Gentile members on the ground of their knowledge of Christ's Sonship and resurrection. Knowing them to be Christians, he knew they had been taught and believed both these facts.

Again, it was not St Paul who founded the Church at Jerusalem, for he had devoted himself to the work of destroying it. He has himself given us the account of this part of his life in the unquestioned Epistle to the Galatians. There he tells us that when he came amongst the Jewish Christians, they found he was preaching the faith he had once destroyed. What the faith St Paul preached everywhere was, we know undoubtedly. It was "the literal "fact of the resurrection. The very designation of God is "'He who raised up the Lord from the dead.' In this "miracle lay the sum of the new revelation, the sign of "Christ's Sonship*." Now if when he came to Jerusalem ten years after our Lord's death, this faith had been to them a new one, or in any way different from what they had already received and for which they had suffered persecution, would they have acknowledged him? It is clear they received their new ally with some doubt and suspicion at first. He spent fifteen days at this time with St Peter, and saw also James, the Lord's brother. Fourteen years after this, when therefore he had already written some of his epistles (that to the Thessalonians in 52), he again went up to Jerusalem, and conferred with St John, Cephas and James; who acknowledged him as the preacher to the Gentiles of the same Gospel which they were preaching to the Jews. If there had been any such

* Rom. i. 12; v. and vi.

† Canon Westcott, *Gospel of the Resurrection*.

fundamental difference, if he was proclaiming Christ's resurrection, and they did not know whether He was risen; if he was teaching Christ as the Son of God, and they had only known Him and taught Him as the greatest of men;—it is impossible that either the Jewish Church or these apostles could have thus set their seal to St Paul's apostleship. Clearly also St Paul was ready enough to differ from them, as he did from St Peter when he saw occasion. How would he have differed had he found their Gospel wanting that, which was the sum and substance of his own?

Then we find St Paul, writing to the Corinthians concerning the resurrection, says, "whether it were I or "they", i.e. others of the first promulgators of the Christian faith, "so we preach, and so ye believe,—except ye "believed without cause." We have then in this celebrated chapter the record of facts taught not by St Paul alone, but by other teachers from various Christian Churches. We know also, from the Philippians, that some of these teachers having ill-will to St Paul would have gladly laid hold of any discrepancy between the faith of the Jewish Churches and his. Yet we find him appealing to the Corinthians' own personal knowledge of the identity of the teaching they had received from himself and from these,—an identity not of abstract doctrine but mainly of facts, and this of facts which had occurred during their own lifetime. Polycarp's testimony to St Paul's teaching is interesting, as coming from the disciple of St John. Writing to the Philippians Polycarp says: "Neither I nor "any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of "the blessed and glorified Paul. He when among you "accurately and steadfastly taught the truth; and when "absent he wrote letters, which if you accurately study you

“will find to be the means of building you up in that faith which has been given to you.”

So far then is it from being true that “we have no contemporaneous history at all, as to what the first promulgators of Christianity actually asserted;” we have in these acknowledged, undisputed Epistles of St Paul, an accurate history of what he and others actually asserted and taught from A.D. 37 to 60: and we have Polycarp’s testimony as to this faith of St Paul being still the faith of the Church in his time. Thus, if we give up every book of the New Testament, which is either seriously or idly questioned by the extremest school of critics; we still find that the facts of Christ’s resurrection, of His divine Sonship, and of His present reign in heaven, were taught within ten years of the Saviour’s death as the sum and substance of the Christian faith, the source of the Christian life, the foundation of the Christian Church. Then seven years after His death, we find men, women and children being persecuted for their faith in Christ’s resurrection*. The faith must have existed before the persecution: no time is left for the growth of myths: no possible theory of ‘later interpolations’ can touch the evidence of these admittedly genuine epistles. I have quoted from these four epistles only, because no one questions their genuineness. The two Epistles to the Thessalonians are really unquestioned: the only objections made to their authenticity by two German critics, Schrader and Bauer, have been refuted by De Wette and others, and have obtained no credence in Germany itself. Their contents entirely agree on these supernatural and divine facts with the other four. For the rest of his epistles I must refer you

* Gal. i. 13; comp. 23.

to *Our Christian Hope**, from which I have gathered much of this argument, and to Westcott *On the Canon*, part II.

We come then to our second question: how can we show the continuity of Christian faith and doctrine from the time of the apostles, to the fourth century? The writer of *Supernatural Religion* represents the first three centuries as an obscure age, known to us only by the most fragmentary and purely traditional legends. But it was in fact not an age of legends; and our knowledge of it is documentary. "The Gospel history was written in the blaze of the most brilliant and diffused age of literature, when the intercourse between men in all parts of the civilised world was more intimate than at any other time," says Maurice. It is an anachronism to assert that in such an age myths and legends could grow with such speed, and spread with such power. There are two lines of evidence to be noted here, decisive against any such explanation of the growth of our faith.

The first is the marvellous rapidity of its growth, as evidenced by the persecutions raised against it. The other is the individual continuity of the life and the faith of so many distinct Churches, which were unquestionably founded in the first century, each of which handed down the faith they had received from their own special teachers, each distinct Church being jealous for the authority of their own oral traditions and their own epistles and other written documents; each receiving those communicated to them from other Churches with strict scrutiny: and yet found by the end of the second and third centuries to be all holding the same faith as to these fundamental and divine facts. The amount of this continuity of faith will be best judged of

* *The Hulsean Lectures* for 1875, by the Rev. E. T. Vaughan.

from the accompanying chart. The argument from it is this. "The common belief of all the churches shows a common origin for that belief: it is an effect which must have a cause. ... That those who were scattered abroad by the persecution after St Stephen's death, and went everywhere preaching the Word, should have agreed in this testimony, is impossible, if the testimony were not true." And the problem thus set before the advocates of the gradual growth of the Christian faith by legendary incrustations, is this: They have to account for the simultaneous growth of precisely the same legends, not in the case of one church or one tribe, but in the case of nearly every known race in the Roman Empire, and in above twenty known churches (several having written apostolic epistles to refer to); all of whom are found to hold, at the end of two hundred years, the same faith with each other, and with St Paul's epistles. It was not only in Judea and Galilee; it was in Syria, in Antioch, all over Asia Minor, at Alexandria, Corinth, Athens and in Macedonia—it was in Rome itself—not very obscure or ignorant cities—that within twenty or twenty-five years after our Lord's death these churches were being formed, and men were being persecuted for maintaining His resurrection and His reign. True, those who went everywhere preaching the Gospel came out from Palestine in the first instance. But the more the superstitious character of the Jews is urged the more marvellous its reception is. The mere fact that it came to them from Jews, must have prejudiced the whole Gentile world against it. And it in every way opposed the superstitions and the expectations of the Jews: the renunciation of an earthly kingdom, the breaking down the wall of separation between them and the heathen, the admission of the Gentiles to an equal place in God's

church, must have made it hateful to them. The Scribes and Pharisees who strove to destroy it, were desperately in earnest: they dreaded the spread of faith in Christ before His resurrection, they took every measure to prevent it, and resisted and persecuted it from the first moment by every means in their power, by arguments, threats, promises and punishment;—the one obvious means of destroying it by exposing the dead body of Jesus, they never attempted.

Thirty-four years after the crucifixion the first persecution in Rome began under Nero. The second under Domitian was sixty-seven years after the crucifixion. And seventy-seven years after it Pliny wrote that the Christians in Bithynia were so numerous the worship of the Gods was nearly extinct. Is it credible that these Christians were dying, or willingly enduring shame and torture, for the sake of legendary tales which, had they grown at all, must have begun to grow within their own memory? that they died for the truth of a tale, which many of them must have known was not the same tale they had heard when they were young, but ‘crusted over’ with new and strange circumstances? Men are not indifferent to the reality of that for which they suffer the loss of all things.

Under these circumstances it is easy to account for the fact, that each church should carefully and anxiously preserve its own creed and traditions of our Lord’s life and of their founder’s teachings. But further, these persecutions compelled and intensified the intercourse of all these churches with each other: and thus the apostolic writings preserved by any one church, would soon become the common property of most.

The practice of reading portions of these in all their public services, which was early adopted, rendered it almost

impossible that these books could be altered, or new writings be slipt in, unnoticed. "Cassian* tells us that in "the churches of Egypt, after singing the Psalms two lessons "were read, one from the Old and one from the New Testament; a practice which he says was so ancient that no one "could tell whether it were a human institution or not. "That the worshippers were not inattentive to changes in "the lessons thus read, we learn from Augustine: who tells "us that when Jerome put forth his revised version of "the Scriptures, and an African Bishop read out of the "book of Job in this new translation, there was an actual "uproar among the people, because what they heard "differed from that to which they had been accustomed "all their lives, and which had been read for centuries†." The earliest mention of this custom is by Justin Martyr. In his Apology, addressed to Antoninus Pius, and written before A.D. 150, he tells the Emperor that in the assemblies of the Christians "the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read as long "as time permits." In another place he explains "that "the memoirs of the Apostles are what are called the "Gospels": in a third passage he states "that they were "composed by Apostles or their followers." Consider the force of this fact: every Christian who attended public worship must have known, whether he heard the same Gospels read aloud which he had first been used to hear; or whether what was read was interpolated with any fresh matter. "Thus any two men, living successively to the "age of sixty-five, would be able to transmit irrefragable "testimony covering one hundred years" as to the identity

* A monk in the 5th century, first in Egypt: he spent the latter part of his life at Marseilles.

† Prof. Plumptre's paper at Church Congress, 1881, *On Revised Version*.

of these books, or as to any changes made from that edition which had been first received by the churches. Thus the theory of the original Gospel being lost and the four we have gradually creeping into general acceptance, is incompatible with the facts. We shall have to refer to this lectionary again. I have adverted to it here as at once explaining and witnessing to the continuity of Christian faith and tradition, in so many scattered churches, through these earlier centuries.

We now turn to our third question. Do the Gospels give us substantially the authentic evidence of contemporaneous witnesses of the events they record? If we turn first to the external literary proofs we have of the dates at which our written Gospels must have been in existence, we shall at least see how very carefully these persecuted men strove to preserve the accuracy and authenticity of these records of their faith. I can only give them very hurriedly; you will find them very intelligibly drawn out in a little work—*The Lost Gospel**. Of the continuity of this chain of evidence you will be able to judge from the chart at the end of the volume.

Our first standing-point here is Eusebius. Born in 270, he wrote a history of the early literature of the church about 325. In dealing with the history of the canon of the New Testament, he gives a list of those books which were at that time counted genuine, disputed, and spurious. He carefully notes the number and the names of the earlier writers who had quoted those books of Scripture, of whose acceptance by the whole church any doubts had been entertained: thus showing that during these three hundred years books were not received as canonical,

* Published in 1875.

except on what the church deemed sufficient evidence of their reception from apostolic times by the whole church. He came to man's estate within two hundred years from the writing of the fourth Gospel: and he had before him a great mass of Christian literature which has now perished: e.g. he gives accounts of writings of Papias and eleven others, who all flourished within seventy-five years of St John's death. "Eusebius knows but of four Gospels as canonical: he has never heard of any others as accepted by the whole church, and he is wholly ignorant of any doubt having ever been cast on the authority of these four, in any branch of the Catholic Church." It is acknowledged by all and is quite clear that these, our four Gospels, have neither been forged nor altered since his time: whilst his entire ignorance of any such origin or corruption before his time, throws the possibility of such a change back at least half a century.

The interval between 300 and 200 is filled up by several writers whose works we still have. Of these I will take three: Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, martyred in 257; Hippolytus who died in 240; Origen of Alexandria, born about 185, died in 254. Cyprian writes, "The Church setting forth the likeness of Paradise includes within her walls fruit-bearing trees: these trees she waters with four rivers, that is with the four Gospels." Hippolytus is the author of a commentary on the second Psalm: the following is an extract from it. "When He came into the world He was manifested as God and man. And it is easy to see the man in Him, when He hungers and suffers exhaustion, and is weary and athirst; and sleeps on a boat's pillow, and entreats the removal of the cup of suffering, and sweats in an agony, and is strengthened by an angel;...and gives up the ghost, and has His side

"pierced by a spear, and is wrapped in linen and laid in a tomb, and is raised by the Father from the dead. And the Divine in Him on the other hand is equally manifest; when He is worshipped by angels, and seen by shepherds, and waited for by Simeon, and inquired after by wise men and pointed out by a star; and at a marriage makes wine of water, and chides the sea, and walks on the deep, and makes one see who is blind from birth, and raises Lazarus when dead four days"—and so he goes on. The writer of *The Lost Gospel* says, "I have counted above fifty references to St Matthew and forty to St John in this commentary."

Origen forms the link between the third and second centuries, being born within twenty years of Justin Martyr's death: so that if Justin Martyr wrote before the four Gospels were written and known, they must have been forged or at any rate imposed on the church in the short interval between his death and Origen's youth. For Origen, naming our four Gospels, writes: "which are the only undisputed ones in the whole Church of God throughout the world."

Thus these three men carry back Eusebius's testimony a full century, and we find that as in 300, so also in 200, the Christian church was fully persuaded of the genuineness and authenticity of these four Gospels, and "had never heard of their being questioned." And these are just three specimens of the sort of evidence we have for the fact which Canon Westcott sums up thus. "With the exception of the Hebrews, the second and third epistles of St John, second of St Peter, St James, St Jude, and the Revelation, all the other books of the New Testament were acknowledged as Apostolic and authoritative throughout the church at the close of the second

“century”: *i.e.* the four Gospels, the Acts, the thirteen epistles of St Paul, the first epistles of St John and St Peter. “The evidence of the great Fathers by which the church is represented varies in respect of those disputed books: but the Canon of the acknowledged books is established by their common consent. Thus the testimony on which it rests is not gathered from one quarter but from many, and these the most widely separated by position and character. It is not given as a private opinion but an acknowledged fact, not as a late discovery but as an original tradition.”

Thus it is clear that neither these, nor indeed the six disputed books about which the heads of the church were still debating, could either have been forged or in any material way interpolated or altered since this date of 200. It is equally certain that all really Apostolic books must have been written by A.D. 100. And the time for possible forgery is still further limited by the consideration, that Origen's testimony shows that the memory of the first admission of the four Gospels into the sacred canon by the whole church, was lost by the later of these dates.

Now in this century, 100 to 200, there are four writers whose works we still have.

Clement of Alexandria, writing about 190, and speaking of a saying attributed to our Lord, says: “In the first place then, in the four Gospels handed down to us we have not this saying, but in that according to the Egyptians.” He crowds his work with quotations from all the four Gospels,—seven or eight from the first chapter of St John: one of these is given thus: “And John the Apostle saith, ‘no man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten God, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.’”

Tertullian* wrote in Rome or Africa. In a treatise against Marcion he writes: "Of the Apostles then John and Matthew first instil faith into us, whilst of apostolic men Luke and Mark renew it afterwards. These all start with the same principles of the faith, so far as relates to the One only God the Creator and His Christ. Never mind if there occurs some variation in the order of their narratives, provided that there be agreement in the essential matter of the faith, in which there is disagreement with Marcion†." Does not this show it was no careless or ignorant acceptance, but a strict scrutiny, study and comparison of the text of the Gospels which was going on in these latter years of the second century?

About the year 180, Theodoret of Antioch expressly declared the four Gospels to be inspired, and he classes them with the Old Testament Scriptures.

Our next writer is Irenæus‡. In his youth he was the disciple of Polycarp and of Papias, both of whom were personal disciples of St John. He quotes 'sayings of Elders' whom he knew and whom he calls disciples of the Apostles, and in these 'sayings' are quotations from the Gospels§. The disciple of Polycarp and most diligent to learn what the Apostles taught, it is not credible that he should have been deceived into accepting a spurious Gospel, not really John's, as genuine. It is clear he had no doubt whatever of the genuineness of all four, for he says: "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are....He who was manifest to men has given us the Gospel under four

* Born 152, converted 185, priest 192.

† Marcion apparently denied the reality of Christ's human nature.

‡ Born 140, bishop of Lyons before 180, martyred 202.

§ *The Lost Gospel*.

“aspects, but bound together by one Spirit....For that according to John relates his original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father:...but that according to St Luke takes up His priestly character. Matthew again is the Gospel of His Humanity....Mark on the other hand commences with a reference to the prophetic spirit coming down from on high, and on this account he made a compendious and cursory narrative, for such is the prophetic character.” “He quotes the evangelists by name, and by texts constantly: e.g. Matth. i. six times, with remarks on the whole chapter; Matth. ii. three times. He has eight references to the third chapter—and so with the others: the references to the first chapter of St John are absolutely innumerable*.” Thus showing the Gospels he used were the same as those we have. Then we have learnt from Justin Martyr that certain ‘Memoirs of the Apostles’ called Gospels were used, together with other canonical books, as the public lectionary of the church before 150, when therefore Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp and Papias, was a boy of ten: and now we find that when he was a man of forty, the reception of our four Gospels as genuine and as Scripture was such an accomplished fact, that it seemed to him a natural necessity there should be four and neither more nor less. “If during these thirty years of his life these books had been either introduced or altered, the fact could not possibly have been so completely forgotten that neither his nor any other man’s memory, neither history nor tradition had preserved the slightest hint of it; when portions of them were publicly read in all the assemblies of the Church.”

* He quotes ten times from the first epistle of St Peter: his other references are from the Acts, Romans, Ephesians, Galatians, 1 Cor., 1 Thess., and first epistle of St John.

Again Justin Martyr cordially accepts every supernatural element in Christianity which the Church now holds*. If these crept into the church erroneously after the Apostles' days, they must have crept in and been accepted before he began to write, which was certainly not more than fifty-two years after St John's death. In this respect his teaching was the same as that we found in the undisputed epistles of St Paul written about ninety years previously. "In his Dialogue with Trypho he gives also "that peculiar teaching which is found in the fourth "Gospel, he refers to the history, adopts the language, and "urges the arguments found only in St John's Gospel.— "His argument with Trypho turns much on the Divinity "of Christ, and speaks constantly of the Logos, which "some of our later critics will have it was imported into "Christianity not by St John's teaching, but from Philo "and the Alexandrian school. But Justin never mentions "Philo, though arguing with a Jew, with whom Philo's "name would have had great authority; neither does he "use Philo's terminology but St John's: thus when Philo "wrote: 'this Divine Logos, the bread which He has given "'us to eat, is Reason'; Justin writes, 'the food by which "'we are nourished is the flesh and blood of that Jesus "'Who was made flesh.'

Three names fill up the interval between St John and these writings of Justin Martyr,—Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius of Antioch, and Clement of Rome.

Polycarp was martyred at Smyrna in A.D. 167. He

* I. e. the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Logos, the miraculous conception, birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ; the predictive element in prophecy; the atoning virtue of the death of Christ; the mysterious inward grace in both sacraments; the heart-cleansing of the Spirit of God, the resurrection of the body, eternal reward and punishment.

told the Proconsul before whom he was tried, "eighty and six years I have served Christ—how then can I blaspheme my Saviour and my King?" This places his baptism in the year eighty-one, fifty years after the resurrection of Christ, and seventeen years before the death of St John, whose disciple he is said to have been. He was also the tutor of Irenæus, who must have been thirty years old at the time of his master's death.

Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians is still preserved. You will find it in the *Apostolic Fathers*, Ante-Nicene Christian Library. Dr Donaldson says of it* "its authenticity can on no fair ground be questioned: it is abundantly established by external evidence, and supported by internal. There is a general consent amongst scholars, that we have in this letter a genuine production of Polycarp."

In it he quotes sentences out of our New Testament books at least twenty times, besides many obvious references; and in the twelfth chapter he quotes them 'as Scripture.' "For I trust that ye are well versed in the Sacred Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you....It is declared then in these Scriptures 'Be ye angry and 'sin not,' and 'let not the sun go down on your wrath.' ...But may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Who is the Son of God and our everlasting High Priest, build you up." The date of this epistle is fixed by the death of Ignatius, for in it he asks for "any certain information concerning him and his companions," and sent it with Ignatius' epistle to himself.

Ignatius was cast to wild beasts at Rome under the Emperor Trajan either in A.D. 107 or 116. Of his genuine

* Preface, in same volume.

epistles three remain; that to Polycarp, to the Romans, and to the Ephesians. I have only time for one quotation. Of Christ he wrote "Look for Him Who is above all time, "eternal, invisible, yet Who became visible for our sakes: "impalpable and impassible, yet Who became passible on "our account, and Who in every kind of way suffered for "our sakes." Thus he plainly believed in the Divinity of our Lord.

Clement, bishop of Rome, wrote an epistle to the Corinthians probably in Domitian's reign, A.D. 97: a copy of this epistle was found subjoined to the books of the New Testament in the Alexandrian MS., codex A. Irenæus wrote of him: "He had seen the blessed Apostles and "conversed with them, and had the preaching of the "Apostles still ringing in his ears, and their traditions "before his eyes." Clement quotes in this epistle from the epistle to the Hebrews: names the Persons of the Holy Trinity as being "the faith and hope of the elect": and shows how "the Lord continually proves to us there shall "be a future resurrection, of which He has rendered the "Lord Jesus Christ the firstfruits, by raising Him from "the dead."

The spurious epistle of St Barnabas, dated by some critics at the end of the first century, by others thirty years later, contains an exact quotation from St Matthew, with the authoritative formula "It is written," *i.e.* it is Scripture.

We have seen then what beyond all question St Paul was teaching up to the year 58 or 60. In 97 we find St Clement was teaching the same faith, and was quoting St Paul and the epistle to the Hebrews, in writing to a church founded by St Paul and possessing documents of

his writing addressed to themselves. Ignatius writing by 116 teaches the same faith as these men, and the same still taught by the churches. Then as to the Canon of the New Testament; we find Polycarp, who was baptized in 81, in epistles written before 120 quotes from or refers to passages out of ten books of the New Testament, as Scripture. We find that before 150, and therefore in Polycarp's lifetime, some of these books—the Gospels certainly—were read aloud continually in all the churches as the acknowledged writings of the Apostles or apostolic men. It is certain that our four Gospels obtained complete credence through all the churches in the second century. If then we are told three of them are unauthentic compilations, and one an elaborate forgery, this is the dilemma; how and at what date did they obtain this complete credence? Four books composed without consent are launched by inconceivable good fortune into general circulation, during the lifetime of one at least of St John's personal pupils; and are received by all the churches with such ardour that they all say, "These are our original and only authentic Gospels, which we have heard read aloud in our assemblies from our fathers' days."

"Either," says Mr Conder, "either they contained the universally received account of the life and death of Christ, or they did not. If not, how were the churches persuaded to accept them, and, flinging away their old records, to enshrine these novelties in their hearts? If they did, then their contents are contemporary. Common belief shows a common origin: it is an effect which must have a cause: and when no cause is possible except the truth of the facts believed, it becomes irrefragable, because it is evidence which cannot be suborned. This is not a case of conflicting evidence, for there is absolutely

"none against the Gospels*." And it is incredible there should be *no* evidence against them, if they were not authentic. The negative fact that St John's Gospel is not named where we might have expected it would be, as by Polycarp† and others, has no weight against the positive evidence we have of its early use and universal acceptance.

And this conclusion of their authenticity as contemporary documents is abundantly confirmed by their own internal evidence. This is threefold. (i) Their character as compared with the known writings of the immediate successors of the Apostles. (ii) The evidence they afford as to the cause and mode of their being written. (iii) The unintentional coincidences and discrepancies which exist between themselves, and also between them and the secular history and literature of the day.

The first I summarize from Mr Vaughan's *Christian Hope*. "The fathers and apologists of the close of the "first and the early half of the second century, are men "evidently oppressed, almost enfeebled, by their conscious "inferiority to the giant race which had gone before them. "And a glance at the writings, which the next generation "certainly received as apostolic, tells us why Clement, "Ignatius and Polycarp felt themselves to be the puny "successors of the Giants. Yet if the Apostles were not "the men we believe them to be, and if they and their "immediate associates did not write these books, then "these feeble successors did."..."Thus the early half of the "second century was entirely incapable of inventing either "the character of Christ or the New Testament history of "the Apostolic age." You may remember the dictum of

* Rev. E. R. Conder, *Basis of Faith*.

† Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians fills eight octavo pages; though so brief, it contains a reference to St John's first epistle.

Stuart Mill on the first of these two points:—that the life of Christ as recorded in the three first Gospels must be a true life, because there could be no one then existing capable of inventing such a character as His. St John's Gospel he despised.

Of the twenty-two Apocryphal Gospels which remain to us, it is said that only five can be assigned to the four first centuries, but several of the traditions they record, are referred to in writings of the second century. "They are interesting as evidence of the importance attached by Christians to the events which form the basis of our faith." But their chief use is as landmarks whence to survey the immeasurable superiority, the unapproachable simplicity and dignity of the Canonical writings*.

"Thus even if the writings of the New Testament were anonymous, they would yet establish their absolute primitiveness, as compared with everything else which literature has produced.—It is especially manifest as compared with the writings of the immediately subsequent period of the Apostolic fathers....What a distance is there between these two literatures, what a gulf separates them! How sharply does the majesty, fullness, and freshness, naturalness, healthiness of the spirit of the one, contrast with the poverty, smallness, stiffness, constraint and bombasticism of the other†!" Then further:—Whilst this hypothesis of their mythical origin and gradual growth fails, the books themselves afford ample evidence to any fair mind as to the cause and the mode of their composition: and it is one which wholly excludes either collusion or copying. For this I must refer you to a work which should be in every teacher's hands, Dr Westcott's

* *Ante-Nicene Fathers. Apocryphal Gospels.*

† Rōthe, *Zur Dogmatik.*

Introduction to the Study of the Gospels. He shows very clearly* that the first work of the Apostles and disciples of Christ was not to write but to preach Christ, His life and ministry, His death and resurrection. Then as their work spread and churches multiplied all over the Roman Empire, in numbers far exceeding their own, one or other of them had occasion to write letters of encouragement, instruction, and warning to the churches they had founded and left behind them. These epistles show how complete was the intercourse kept up between these infant churches, so that nothing material, especially no new doctrine, could be introduced into any of them, but the Apostles heard of it, and wrote at once about it.

Now in those epistles which have come down to us, the history and the words of Christ are assumed as already known to the churches written to, by oral teaching, "So we preach and so ye believed." The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews refers to this spoken word; "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken to us by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard." St James, St Peter, and St John equally make the basis of their teaching and of the Christian life to be the life, words and resurrection of Christ, already known by oral teaching to those to whom they wrote. Hence the history of our Lord is noticed mainly by implication or allusion; and yet these epistles contain in scattered notices a fairly complete outline of Christ's Life. "Thus the spirit, tone, and contents of the epistles presuppose some such record as that contained in the Gospels: and the substance of our Gospels is an adequate explanation of the first form of Christian teaching as manifested in the epistles." And

* Chapter III.

this connexion is fundamental not superficial: it is not on one or two points, but includes the main events of our Lord's life; and it is obviously unintentional.

This oral teaching would naturally be framed to meet the special wants of the hearers: and this feature is markedly preserved in the written Gospels. These men intended, as St Luke tells us, to supply a lasting record of that which before was oral. Thus the Gospels form the last stage of the Apostolic teaching. "The oral gospel "was not an unhistorical tradition: it lasted as oral only "during the lifetime of the eye-witnesses as these successively passed away, it had already taken its written "form."

Then we have distinct traditions concerning the origin and authorship of the four Gospels, which are fully corroborated by their contents. Thus Papias relates, on the authority of "the Elder John," that Mark "wrote "accurately all that Peter mentioned, though he did not "record in order what was done or said by Christ. For "he neither heard the Lord nor saw Him, but subsequently, as I said, he followed Peter*." Irenæus confirms this statement, and Clement of Alexandria records a tradition of the elders, similar but apparently independent, which fixes it as written for the Christians at Rome. To such an origin the internal character of St Mark's Gospel is exactly suited. Men of action rather than of contemplation, St Peter and St Mark were evidently alike; vividly realizing the actions of the Son of God, and loving to fill up the scenes with those graphic details, which might well remain in all their freshness on such a mind as

* The argument in *Supernatural Religion* on this point is amply confuted by Dr Lightfoot in a series of essays, *Contemporary Review*, 1875—1877.

St Peter's. St Mark's frequent explanations of Jewish customs corroborates the tradition of Clement.

In like manner the tradition concerning St Matthew's Gospel is given by Papias; "Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language and each reader interpreted as he could." Eusebius says, "Matthew having formerly preached to Hebrews, when about to go to others, having committed to writing in his native tongue the Gospel which bears his name, supplied by his writing the want of his presence to those whom he left." This Gospel plainly shows that it was written by a Jew and for Jews: the constant references to the Old Testament Scriptures is an instance of this. And the fact that this difficulty (i.e. that while the earliest fathers say it was written in Hebrew, it is always quoted in Greek,)—is handed down to us, is a guarantee of the honesty of the tradition that has preserved it.

St Luke himself records the occasion and the method of his writing: and we know both from the Acts and St Paul's epistles that he was the companion of that Apostle: so that when Irenæus states "Luke set down in a book the Gospel which Paul preached," there is a *prima facie* credibility for this statement, and no evidence at all to set against it.

The evidence concerning St John's Gospel is of the same character; externally in the early use made of it, internally as to the causes which led to its composition. "There can be no question in this case as to its being a compilation or a copy from some earlier written Gospel. Its distinctness in thought and character show it is no summary: its unity of style excludes all notion of gradual interpolations." Tradition tells us that St John was besought by his disciples to add to the written records

already known, those discourses and acts of the Lord which he related to them. The simplicity of its language, the immensity of its thoughts, bring to mind the statement of Justin respecting the teaching of Christ,—“Brief and concise were the sentences uttered by Him,” and suggest its own history. “Having to commit to His Apostles truths they could not then comprehend, and yet were to remember, Our Lord did this in the short brief utterances, often repeated, of sentences which could neither be forgotten nor altered in their minds. Then when St John, watching over the building up of the churches, found the truth attacked by a new and philosophical foe, and came in contact with Greek and Alexandrian thought and words: how vividly would these sentences of his beloved Master spring up again, and give him the key to that which they were seeking for, and which in Christ he possessed.”

The actual tradition then of the Churches concerning the authorship of these four Gospels, is on the face of it so highly probable, that before it is set aside we feel we want some explanation: how are we to account for the neglect of the Apostles themselves, if indeed they left no written history of the life, works, and words of that Saviour, for preaching whom they gave up their lives? How account for the neglect of St John's disciples to ask him to write, or to write down from his lips, those precious relations of Christ's teaching, which they had daily to repeat in preaching and daily to refer to in their disputes with Greek and Jewish philosophers? The books we have exactly fulfil this obvious condition: we know they were in general use within fifty years of the Apostolic era; they are quoted or referred to by the three earliest writers whose epistles have come down to us: their contents

exactly correspond to the traditions we have of their origin and authorship. And we are asked to disregard all this critical, circumstantial and historical evidence, because someone has hypothesized another explanation of their origin; which is, it is said, a possible explanation, but in support of which no positive, and not very strong negative evidence can be adduced. The demand is unscientific. When, as in this case, the best possible evidence does not amount to absolute demonstration, we are not therefore at liberty to throw aside the evidence we have and proceed by mere hypothesis, as though nothing historical was known on the matter. That Renan has another explanation, is no reason for slighting the actual evidence we have. His might be a very plausible hypothesis, if there were no evidence at all on the matter: as there is, it is superfluous.

We can only turn for a few moments to that exhaustless portion of the internal evidences for the truthfulness of these books, which is derived from unintentional coincidences and divergencies. This sort of evidence goes far to prove the writers are giving original and true witness. If they were inventing independently, there would be no habitual agreement: if they were either inventing in concert, or copying from one original, there would be no discrepancies beyond verbal ones. No two independent eye-witnesses ever observed the same event from precisely the same point of view: and hence if four eye-witnesses got up one after the other and swore to precisely the same minute details and circumstances, lawyers would know at once there must be collusion between them.

Now in comparing the three first Gospels together*, as you would any other three histories, it appears that

* See Dr Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, chap. III.

they exhibit a remarkable correspondence of substance and subject; whilst in style, and what the Germans call standing-point, they are much more diverse. Then the verbal coincidences are mainly in the records of the words said to be spoken by our Lord and others. In these recitals there is a prevailing unity of style. You may observe this especially in the parables; any just critic would recognise these as the productions of one Narrator: whilst in the narrative portions, just where the writer is telling the history in his own words, there is in each Gospel not only an individual style, but also the result of individual observation, directed by the special purpose which each had in view, and by the character of the writer. Thus we have three independent witnesses as to these words of our Lord, and the three agree as to what they were.

There are at least two sentences of our Lord in St Matthew and in St Luke, which are absolutely one in style and thought with St John's records*: whilst the more marked is the difference between his Gospel and the others, the more certain is it that the Church would not have received it, at so early a period, unless they had known it was the writing of the Apostle.

Then the Gospels have none of the fragmentary or patch-work character, which would be natural in compilations made at second-hand, or interpolated. Each is one organic whole, with a unity of plan, of standing-point, and of language peculiar to itself. Each contains additions to the common matter, but in each case the addition is undistinguishable in style, tone and language from the rest

* Matth. xi. 25, 30; Luke, x. 21, 24. Dr Westcott gives a table of the principal coincidences between St John's Gospel and the Synoptists, chap. v, note p. 291, with this result: Coincidences in imagery 7; in thought 6; in language 3; judgments of the people 3.

of the writing in which we find it. Thus each Gospel is proved to be the work of one writer, writing independently of the others or of any previously written Gospel. For the unintentional coincidences between these Gospels, and the way in which one incidentally supplements the other* I must refer you to Prof. Blunt's work †.

"Again the Christ made known to us in the Epistles, "and in the four Gospels is unmistakeably one and the "same Christ. This strong coincidence, when the portrait "has been drawn by eight, probably by nine writers, who "obviously did not copy from each other, is in itself an "evidence to the truthfulness of the portrait—a proof that "each gives that which he records of Christ accurately."

Of this kind of evidence you will find numberless instances in Dr Farrar's *Life of Christ*. "It is remarkable, Dr Farrar says, "how near the Evangelists often seem to be "to an inaccuracy, while closer inspection shows them to be "on those very points minutely accurate." But this is the sort of accuracy which is peculiar to contemporaneous history, and is quite incompatible with legendary tradition.

The unintentional coincidences, often as to minute circumstances, between St Paul's own epistles and St Luke's history of his acts, are such as are absolutely impossible except to contemporaneous history written at first hand. These have been fully gone into by Paley in his *Horae Paulinae*. Of this Mr Vaughan says ‡, "Possibly "now and then he may have pushed the argument too far.

* E.g. St Matthew and St Mark record the accusation brought against our Lord, concerning the destroying and rebuilding of the temple in three days. St John ii. 19, alone records the words which led to the charge.—Dr Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*.

† *Unintentional Coincidences*, by Prof. Blunt. See also the critical portion of Neander's *Leben Jesu*.

‡ *Our Christian Hope*.

“It is the fashion at the present day to depreciate its force. There are minds too subtle to be convinced by a proof which appeals only to the common sense of men : but it is the special benefit of our English training that we can estimate the real weight of evidence in practical matters. I believe no healthy mind will deny that real coincidences exist between the Acts and these Epistles, which can neither be attributed to chance or to design : and that these are so numerous and so varied as to be substantial indications that the history is true. The history and the letters fit into each other, and incidentally confirm each other in the most remarkable manner.”

Another source of evidence is found in other contemporary or nearly contemporary histories, as Josephus, Pliny, Tacitus, &c.: and here again we come on no contradictory statements. On the other hand, “The state of Judea, civil, political and moral, as learnt from Josephus, is found portrayed incidentally in the Gospels and Acts with the greatest accuracy and the strictest attention to all the circumstances of time and place. The condition of petty violence, robbery, oppression by the rulers, discontent, tumults, factions, &c. amongst the people as described by Josephus, are all reflected in the parables and in the incidents of the narratives.” Here again the undesigned coincidences are, we are told, countless.

Taking this whole mass of evidence, the only possible conclusion is, that the account which the Church possesses of the Life, teaching, character, death and resurrection of our Lord, is a body of historic facts, recorded in original and trustworthy writings by contemporaneous writers. Every test which a rational criticism *can* employ has been applied in abundance to every detail, and has brought in substantially the same verdict.

We have no such amount of evidence as this for any of the most certain facts of ancient history, or for the authenticity of any classic. There is no more reason, though there may be more motive, for denying the natural and obvious verdict in this case, than in the case of Josephus, Livy, Pliny, or Tacitus. To deny the weight of such evidence in the case of our Christian Records—evidence so abundant, so varied, from such entirely separate sources, and yet all concurring in one conclusion, is surely possible only to “that credulity of Scepticism which will swallow “anything, provided it be not in the Scriptures and “cannot be proved out of them*.”

* Row, *Bampton Lectures*.

LECTURE XIII.

THE LIFE AND PERSON OF CHRIST, AND THE RESULTS OF HIS COMING.

"The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God."

"When I awake up after Thy Likeness I shall be satisfied with it."

YOU will remember that when we began this enquiry we agreed to abide by those ordinary laws of evidence, which apply alike to all practical and to all scientific evidence. The canon we shall have to use to-day is the first of the three*, which tells us we must abide

i. By that kind of proof the subject we are enquiring into admits of: and ii. that amount of proof which on such a subject it is possible to have. You will remember that the kind of evidence here must, by the nature of the case, be moral and cumulative as distinguished from geometrical and experimental proofs: and that the amount we ought to demand is moral demonstration; i.e. that the opposite is shown to be incredible.

This moral demonstration of the objective truth of the facts of our Christian Creed, we have in Christ Himself. His Life, and His Mission, the effect of His coming on the

* Lecture II. page 32.

history of the world, the power He is now exercising over the hearts, and minds, and lives of men—all these things are not more real than they are superhuman. But the great and crowning miracle is Christ Jesus.

And when we thus come to Christ, "the power of God" and the wisdom of God," we find that here we have the true Corner Stone, which unites and crowns the whole edifice of Revelation. As all the evidences we have gone through, strong as they are in their separate and their cumulative weight, would be contradicted if Christ failed us: so all these evidences together are as nothing to the invincible, unquestionable fact that Christ has lived on this earth, not only the Revealer, but Himself the Revelation of God to men.

We have seen that the Bible History as a whole, and especially the New Testament Records of Christ, are abundantly proved, by every test that a reasonable historical criticism can apply, to be substantially and often even minutely authentic. Scientifically then we are bound to accept these as giving a true account of what Christ was, and what He did, and what He said: the common sense rule of law comes in here and tells us, we must take concerning the history of Christ the best evidence we can get: and that is the narratives of the four Gospels. We must take it as it is, without tampering with it, without altering it; without omitting any portion of it because it does not suit our tastes, or fall in with our sense of the fitness of things. But without now insisting on these things, what I would point out is, that there is no dispute between us and our opponents, as to the reality of the life and the character of our Lord. And as they, like us, have no other means of learning either but from these Records, they must admit, with us, their substantial accuracy.

Our first point then is the absolute reality of this Life. That the character and life of the Saviour as given in the Gospels, could not have been depicted there, had it not been the actual life, is evident, and is fully acknowledged by some of the greatest sceptics. If it were not real it was invented: and this Mill has demonstrated to be incredible. "There was no one in that day," he says, "who could by any possibility have invented it." Yet more, whilst on the one hand both the Life and the character here revealed to us stand far above the highest ideal any poet has ever imagined; on the other hand it is an absolutely consistent and homogeneous Personality that is thus placed before us. Though it is given us, as we have seen, in a fragmentary manner, by eight or nine different writers in the New Testament, yet the portrait thus placed before us is absolutely one and the same. It is clear therefore that the men who penned these Records, did so from the facts of His life.

There is another feature in the records which tends to show they could have added nothing of their own. They never, except in one short sentence in St John*, attempt to describe Christ: they tell us in the briefest, simplest manner what our Saviour did and what He said, and now and then what was the impression made on those about Him. Now to create so complete and consistent a character and life in this way, is a task scarcely possible for the highest genius, and utterly impossible to a combination of several minds. Again, in not one of the incidents or the speeches recorded does the Saviour fall below Himself: but had any invented incidents been introduced into these records, in the centuries immediately succeeding the Apostolic age, we know they must have been unworthy.

* Chap. i. 14; see also in this connexion 46.

And this is confirmed fully by the Apocryphal Gospels that have come down to us. Their incidents are often puerile; and almost always, at the best, jar on our sense of what was fitting and worthy of the Christ of the Gospels. Indeed if you turn to any of those lives of Christ with which the present day abounds, you will see the same thing there. Interesting in parts, most useful in pointing out the connexion and sequence of the events recorded, they are altogether beneath Christ when they attempt descriptions, or would give us the writer's conception of Him. No life of Christ has a touch of true likeness except when it closely follows the Scripture records, in the Scripture words, reverently abstaining from adding anything to the picture. Take Neander, take *Ecce Homo*, take Farrar, take even Pressensé—the least painful in this particular because the least subjective;—well it is not the Christ of the Scriptures, but a broken, unworthy image of Christ that is given us; at once less real as a man and less Divine. I know not what stronger demonstration we can have of the objective reality of the life and character of the Saviour than this, that it could by no human possibility have been thus recorded by human writers, had it not been wholly fact.

Do any say, they do not perceive this transcendent beauty and Majesty of Christ? Doubtless it requires study to gain any clear sight or understanding of any part of it: doubtless the best way of learning it, is to strive to follow Him as our Example. But let us see what others have found in this Life, who have approached it chiefly on the human and intellectual side.

“The Life of Christ must ever remain the noblest and “most fruitful study for men, of every age. It is admitted “even by those of other faiths (Jews and Mahommedans)

“that He was at once a great Teacher and a living illustration of the truths He taught. Nor is there any hesitation among the great intellects of different ages, whatever their special position towards Christianity, whether disciples, opponents, indifferent or vaguely latitudinarian*.”

Spinoza calls Christ “the symbol of Divine Wisdom†.” Kant and Jacobi hold Him up to us as “the symbol of ideal perfection;” Hegel, as that of the Divine and human. Jean Paul Richter says, “The Life of Christ concerns Him, Who being the Holiest among the Mighty, the Mightiest among the Holy, lifted with His pierced hands empires off their hinges, turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages.”

Goethe says: “I esteem the Gospels to be thoroughly genuine, for there shines forth from them the reflected splendour of a sublimity proceeding from the Person of Jesus Christ, of so divine a kind as only the Divine could ever have manifested on earth‡.” So Herder, “Jesus Christ is in the noblest and most perfect sense the realized ideal of humanity.” Another quotation§, given us from a less well known writer, says “No one ever thus lived; nor did anything so truly great and good as the Bible tells us of Him, ever enter into the heart of man. It is a holy Form, which rises before the poor pilgrim like a star in the night, and satisfies his inmost craving, his most secret yearning.”

Again Rousseau could write|| “How petty are the

* *The Life and Words of Christ*, Geikie, ch. i.

† *Über den Gott in Geschichte*.

‡ *Conversations with Eckerman*, iii. 371.

§ *Mathius Claudius*, a German poet 18th cent. and a Christian.

|| *Emile*, I. iv.

“books of the Philosophers with all their pomp compared
 “with the Gospels! Can it be that writings at once so
 “sublime and so simple are the works of men? Can He
 “whose life they tell be Himself no more than a mere
 “man? is there anything in His character of the enthusiast,
 “of the ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity
 “in His ways, what touching grace in His teaching! What
 “loftiness in His maxims, what profound wisdom in His
 “words, what presence of mind, aptness and delicacy in
 “His replies! What an empire over His passions!

“My friend, men do not invent like this; and the facts
 “respecting Socrates which no one doubts, are not so well
 “attested as those about Christ. These Jews could never
 “have struck this tone or thought of this morality: and
 “the Gospel has characteristics of truthfulness so grand, so
 “striking, so perfectly inimitable, that their inventors
 “would be even more wonderful than He whom they
 “portray.—If the death of Socrates be that of a sage; the
 “life and death of Jesus are those of a God.”

“Jesus of Nazareth, our divinest symbol! higher has
 “the human thought not yet reached—A symbol of quite
 “perennial infinite character, whose significance will ever
 “demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made
 “manifest*.” Dr Channing, the greatest and most thought-
 “ful perhaps of Unitarian teachers, maintains “The character
 “of Jesus is quite inexplicable on human principles.” De
 Wette, than whom no biblical critic in Germany more
 learned, piercing and fearless is to be found, writes:

“This only I know, that there is salvation in no other
 “name than in the Name of Jesus Christ the Crucified;
 “and that nothing loftier itself to humanity, than the God-
 “manhood realized in Him, and the kingdom of God which

* T. Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*.

“He founded:—an idea, and a problem not yet rightly understood and incorporated into the life of those even who in other respects justly rank as the warmest and most zealous of Christians. Were Christ indeed and in truth our life, those in whom He (fully) lived, would witness so mightily for Him through their whole life, whether spoken, written, or acted, that unbelief would be forced to silence.”

Once more: “The infinite significance of the life of Christ is not exhausted, by saying that He was a perfect man: perfection merely human does not attract, it repels. It may be copied in form, it cannot be imitated in spirit, for it does not inspire, or fire with love. Faultless men and pattern children—you may admire them but you admire coldly. Praise them as you will, no one is the better for their example, they kindle no enthusiasm and create no likenesses of themselves: they never reproduce themselves in other lives—the true prerogative of all original life.

“If Christ had been only a faultless man, He would never have set up in the world a new type of character which at the end of 2000 years is fresh and life-giving and inspiring still. He never would have regenerated the world, nor drawn all men unto Him by being lifted up a self-sacrifice, making self-devotion beautiful. There was in Him the Divine which remained fixed, the human which was constantly developing*.”

But it will be said, most of these estimates of Christ are taken from men who were not themselves His followers, and who thus invalidated by their practice their own estimate. We have nothing here to do with their consistency: they are quoted to show the estimate made by

* Rev. F. Robertson, *Sermons*, second series, no. 15.

able and honest men, evidently unbiassed by faith or by affection on this matter. They show also that reality and fulness of the history given us of the Saviour, of which we have been speaking, from which alone these writers could learn the character which so vividly impressed them. They may also suggest to us something of what "the salvation" of Christ includes: something of what that new creation will be, when "the sons of God" shall be manifested, and the earnest expectation of the creature shall be satisfied, by waking up in His Likeness.

But to return. Our next point is, that the Person thus made known to us is not a mere man; that He is much more than man. "The person of Christ is not a manifestation of the ordinary powers which energise in men, but of a power which is superhuman and Divine*." History tells us how high great men and heroes can rise above the level of their own age. But it gives us, as Mr Row has shown, "no instance whatever of a man wholly emancipating himself from the conditions of his birth, nurture, and the age in which he grew," as Jesus did. "The lower therefore we put the superstitions of the Jews and the surrounding nations" (in order to account for their crediting a fictitious resurrection) "the more peremptorily does the case demand the superhuman to account for Christ." For Jesus Christ was not more perceptibly raised above His own age, than He is raised now above us and our age.

Again the influence Christ has had and has over men is not a merely human influence, but one evidently superhuman, creative and divine. As Napoleon I. said "Jesus Christ has succeeded in making of every human soul an

* *Revelation an historical fact*, Rev. C. A. Row, *Bampton Lectures* for 1877.

“appendage of His own.” “I think I know something of human nature—and I tell you all these were men; but not one is like Him. Jesus Christ is more than a man. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, I myself, founded great empires; but the creations of our genius depended upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love; and to this very day millions would die for Him.—Here is a conqueror who draws men to Himself for their highest good, who incorporates into Himself not a nation, but the whole human race*.” Renan admits “This sublime Person still presides each day over the destiny of the world,” a fact which is certainly without a parallel. “He acted on the human race with an energy that is absolutely unique; which now for 2000 years is not exhausted, but rather is gathering force and acquiring momentum as time goes on.—The powers that act in the moral world act in conformity with certain well-known laws, no less than physical forces do. Yet the effect which the Lord’s life and character and work have in fact produced in history, cannot at all be accounted for by such laws.—History shows us what man can do; and certifies us that mere man cannot do, what our Lord has in fact done for the race†.”

Consider for a moment what history tells us man can do; and what chances, humanly speaking, there were that Christ should do anything at all. Mr Seeley, the great admirer of the Stoical school, has most distinctly brought out the fact, that *their* teaching could do nothing to raise men, could not even hinder the spread of corruption. “Never was the note of virtue pitched higher, or the philosophy of duty more faithfully and grandly realized, than by Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. But it could

* Quoted by Rev. A. C. Row, *Bampton Lectures*.

† *Ibid*.

"do nothing to save the world, and it actually went on "rising whilst the multitude were sinking daily into "greater vileness and wickedness*." Unselfish devotion to others and public spirit are taught more forcibly, more fully, and with far less admixture of "hay and stubble†," in the writings of these noble Romans, than by our Comtists, Humanitarians and Altruists; "but society kept "sinking deeper in meanness and incapable selfishness" all the time.

But Christ had been born, lived for thirty years an unknown peasant in an obscure village; then for three years had excited some attention in an insignificant province, was crucified and buried; and the new life of the world began that day. "Twelve men, Jews without any "distinction, any political or social influence, without "except in two instances any intellectual acquirement, "without any aid on earth, with a Gospel which was "opposed to every national and every religious prejudice "of Jew, Greek, and Roman, hostile to every feeling of "pride or selfishness, accomplished the grandest and most "stupendous revolution the world has ever seen. There is "nothing humanly speaking to account for the victory. "People say sometimes they find it hard to believe the "miracles on which Christianity is based; surely the "grandest miracle is the existence of Christianity itself‡." The actual result of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, on the history of the world, is an effect certainly not referable to any human power in the Apostles; it is evidently beyond the power of men to accomplish the

* See also Review of Seeley's *History of Morals*, Macmillan's Mag. May, 1869.

† 1 Cor. iii. 13.

‡ *Some Difficulties of Belief*, Rev. Teignmouth Shore.

victory which, as a matter of fact, Christ and His Apostles have accomplished.

Then the message by which this revolution was effected (as its outward cause, that is) was the declaration of three supernatural facts. It cannot be too distinctly remembered that the Apostles did not convert the world by relating the holy life or repeating the divine words of Christ. They taught the Incarnation, the Death and Resurrection of Christ, and the coming of the Holy Spirit as the fruit of His Resurrection: this was what their Master had taught them to expect, this was what they had themselves witnessed and experienced; and this was wholly supernatural and superhuman.

There can be no question that Christ Himself laid claim to be superhuman; and to possess supernatural powers. The Incarnation is essential to the claim of Christ to be the Life of men. He said He was the Son of God, and one with the Father. If He is not the Son of God, if He had not the power of God, He was not true; and could not therefore be even as much an example and revelation of God to us, as any true man is. But by the acknowledgement of infidels themselves He is this, much more and more truly, than any other man has been. "He "Himself staked the credibility of His message and of His "claims on the fact of His resurrection. He said He "came to redeem mankind from sin and death, by laying "down His life and taking it again. If He were only man, "His claim to do this would have been preposterous; if "He did not rise again, His claim was falsified. If Christ "be not raised our faith is in vain, we are yet under the "power and the guilt of our sins*."

There is, there can be no half way here. It is im-

* See also *Christian Hope*, Lect. III. pp. 147—150.

possible to explain away either of these great claims of Christ, either of these great facts, as figurative, or as subjective, or as anything but real objective facts, or distinct falsehoods. Neither can be half facts—they do not admit of more or less, of degrees. The assertion Christ made, on the objective reality of which the veracity of His claims and of our Redemption depends, is that the Son of God, being Himself God and One with the Father, took on Him our nature and was Incarnate in the man Christ Jesus, as truly as we are incarnate in our living bodies. The resurrection of Christ's body from the grave is asserted as a fact as real, and of the same kind, as His death and burial. And if it were not a fact in this objective sense, and not in any merely subjective haziness, then Christ is not the conqueror and cannot lead us to victory. For the truths of the Resurrection and of the Incarnation are inseparable from each other: our Lord Himself made the former the sign and proof of the latter. And "the truth of the resurrection of Christ," as Canon Westcott says*, "is not an important part of His Gospel, it is the whole of it.—To preach the fact of the Resurrection was the first function of the Evangelists. To embody the doctrine of the Resurrection is the great office of the Church. To learn the meaning of the Resurrection, is the task not of one age but of all."

And not only were our Lord's claims supernatural, but His whole conduct confirms the account we have of those claims. It is inexplicable, unless He had the firmest conviction He should rise again. "Rational sceptics are always ready to admit that Christ was a man charged with a special, express, and unique commission from God

* *Gospel of the Resurrection*, p. 8, 2nd edition.

“to lead mankind to truth and virtue*.” But what progress had He made in this work at the close of the third year of His Ministry? “His followers were few in number, weak in faith; His principles had taken no deep root in their minds: His apostles were wholly unfit to carry on His work, did not understand Him, were full of Jewish prejudice and bent on an earthly kingdom. Had He looked on Himself as a Teacher merely, He must have considered the preservation of His life as a sacred duty, and its being cut short at that time, as nothing short of ruin. Yet after three short years He deliberately places Himself in the hands of His enemies, lays down His life, looks forward to the triumph of His cause through His death.” Nothing can explain His conduct, except His certain expectation that He should rise again, and being risen, should be able to endue His Apostles with power from on high.

Then further: all the events which followed His death, the extraordinary change in the character of the Apostles; their sudden courage, power, knowledge and wisdom; and those astonishing effects of their teaching which we learn from Pliny as certainly as from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St Paul—all these things are natural and orderly sequences, if we accept Christ's Resurrection and the Mission of the Holy Spirit as literal facts. But taken without these antecedents, these subsequent events are so utterly unaccountable as to be at once unnatural, and undeniable.

The probable truth of any great or extraordinary event, whilst never in the slightest degree dependent on our understanding how it was effected, is in a great measure dependent on the character of its results. For example, hardly any amount of direct testimony could convince us

* *Gospel of the Nineteenth Century.*

of the truth of a theory set out by some French writers, that Napoleon conquered at Waterloo, and continued to reign over Europe, till treacherously kidnapped by an English captain. And that because all that followed the battle show he was defeated, and in the subsequent months, not he, but the allied—and on this hypothesis the defeated army,—was reigning at Paris whilst its leaders were giving laws to Europe. In like manner, if Christ's resurrection had obtained credit for a while in Galilee but no lasting results had followed; if the Apostles had continued the same in character and in feebleness; if no new power had animated them; if the kingdom of darkness had received no deadly blow; if the grace of Christ had not then begun to leaven the world; if no new conflict had arisen between the Church and the world, and from that time moulded all subsequent history—then indeed the witness of Apostle and Evangelist—nay the witness borne by the Life and character of Christ Himself would have been insufficient to demonstrate the truth of these miraculous events. "If the fact of the Resurrection be in "itself, as it confessedly is, unique in human experience, "the point it occupies in history is absolutely unique also. "To this point all former history converges as to a goal; "from this point all subsequent history flows as from its "life-giving source*." Thus the actual results of the Resurrection and of the Pentecost have been such, as demand some unique, some abnormal event, as their causal antecedent: they are quite irreconcilable with the hypothesis that the Resurrection itself was a mere delusion. Thus we turn back the difficulty on those who deny the Resurrection of Christ, and ask how they can account for the historical results without it? For here we have authentic and adequate proof, of a state of things suddenly

* *Gospel of the Resurrection*, chap. i. § 44.

beginning (the date being fixed within seven years), and from that time continuing to mould and powerfully change the whole course of the moral and social world, without, on their hypothesis, anything whatever in its preceding state to account for the change. This is a true breach of continuity, and that causeless. On the other hand, the Power which brought Christ into a morally ruined world, is only "a new manifestation of the oldest of Powers,—of that Power which originally introduced Life "into a lifeless world." And the victories of Christ over sickness, over the grave, over the power of sin, are only new examples of "the law of all laws, that when powers "come into conflict the weaker shall give place to the stronger, the lower to the higher."

Let us state this in another way. We have learnt from the history of developement that God has been continually intervening, and introducing new and higher forces and powers, from time to time, into His material and His living Cosmos. To affirm that such interventions must stop there, and "that there never has been and "never will be in human history any necessity for a similar "intervention, or any moral end in God's purposes that "called for such an intervention—is a stupendous assumption, without one atom of evidence to support it*."

In truth, in considering the evidences of the Fall, and the inevitable result of the law of habit on morally disordered beings like ourselves; we were driven to see a very great necessity for some such intervention, if God's purposes are not to be defeated by man's rebellion, and by His own laws. We have seen that men's Godward progress being checked by their fall into disorder, and made hopeless by the law of habit, the Incarnation was necessary (or some

* Rev. E. R. Conder, *Basis of Faith*.

equivalent intervention of Divine life-giving power) to raise them to that new and spiritual relationship to God which Christ proclaimed to us; and the effects of which in actually setting individual men free from the bondage of sinful habits, and giving them again the mastery of their lower nature, are matters of daily experience.

Clearly there is no *à priori* improbability in the fact of the Incarnation to set against all this. It were idle to affirm God could not do this: equally idle to affirm He never would do it; being a God of infinite power and love, and continually imparting to His creatures, out of His own fulness, as they are able to receive, the gifts needed to raise them nearer to Himself. There is no known law of God's acting, which makes it incredible that the Divine Word should take on Him our nature. We are ourselves incarnate in bodies which we are conscious are not ourselves: and how we can be, and how being so, we can act on matter as we do, is so mysterious that it would be incredible, if it were not undeniable.

Reflecting on these things Kingsley writes*, "So "utterly do reason and conscience—and as I think,— "the reason and conscience of the many in all ages,— "demand an Incarnation, that even if Strauss were right, "the Incarnation must either have happened somewhere "else, or will happen some day."

Well then; Jesus, coming as a man, not only claimed to be God's messenger to men, in a special and unique way,—which claim all agree is a true one; but He also claimed to have a commission from God to save men from the moral and spiritual consequences of their past sins, and to set them free from the power of those sinful habits which had become in many cases hereditary in

* *Life*, vol. II, Letters to Thomas Cooper.

them. To do this is to override the moral law of our nature by the interposition of a higher spiritual power; it is to exert a power which is to us supernatural, though to our risen Lord and Saviour it is natural. Now Sir F. Stephen's demand (though perhaps misplaced in the case of which he was speaking) is yet true in respect of Christ, when He laid claim to such a power as this. "If any one," he says, "wants me to believe he has faculties of which I am destitute, he must prove himself to be my superior by appealing to the faculties we have in common*."

This is just what our Lord did, in His miracles, and in His resurrection. In these He appealed to those faculties which He and all men have in common, in proof of His having faculties which they had not. It was essential to the success of His mission to them, they should know this. And so when He read the hearts and answered the thoughts alike of friends and foes; when He healed the sick and gave sight to the blind, when He calmed the storm, and fed the multitude, and raised the dead, alike to the senses, the understandings and the consciences of men, He made it manifest He had faculties which they had not. "It was not miracles as such, but certain plain facts that were wanted. Our Lord professed to be the Son of God; He must exhibit the power of God.—He said He came to deliver mankind from suffering and death; He must exhibit His power of redemption by examples. He said He came to redeem the world by laying down His life and taking it again; He must do this.—What these miracles guarantee is, that our Lord was not talking at random when He said, He was sent from God to do them†." Thus the acknowledged fact that Christ was

* *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1. "Mr Gladstone and Sir C. Lewis."

† *Church Quarterly*, "Supernatural Religion," April 1876.

sent from God to men, with a unique commission, requires as its complement these miracles and miraculous events: it is not their presence—it is their absence that would be unnatural and perplexing.

So again, if we take the Gospel narratives, we have seen that they could by no possibility have been invented by their writers; we have seen their account of Christ's life and works and words is substantially true. Yet if we take out these miracles, we destroy the otherwise clear sequence of the whole history, reduce it to shapeless fragments, make it all inconsistent and unintelligible. "The miracles of Jesus cannot be separated from the narrative; they entwine themselves with the entire thread of His history, weave themselves into His teaching; and form the critical turning-points in that feud between Him and the Jewish rulers which brought Him to the cross." Here the miracles themselves form part of the revelation of God to us, and part also of the moral teaching of Christ. "They are bound up with a teaching which is itself supernatural; with a life which—all other miracles taken away—was supernaturally self-denying, with a philosophy which has given birth to the whole of modern civilization. Did the excitement of ear and eye witnesses thus pervert all the facts of that life, and yet preserve the moral and spiritual teaching pure?—It is not criticism to say that supernatural stories *may* be the result of heated imaginations and exaggerations, unless you can show the records themselves bear the traces of such an origin*." Or we may ask, Was it excitement that made these simple fishermen, these "unlearned and ignorant men," weave all these extraneous and erroneous details into narratives so simple and graphic, with a skill so ingenious, an art so

* "Science, Testimony and Miracles," *Contemp. Review*, Feb. 1876.

consummate, that no criticism can detect, either in language or in thought, either in moral tone or historical continuity, the slightest trace of the joining? They have related the life and words and deeds of One whom we all confess was more than mere man. How could it be then that He should do nothing more than mere man can do? Men are more than mere animals: they can do by nature things which would be supernatural for the animals to do. Shall the lower animals say they cannot, because the supernatural is inadmissible, or at least utterly improbable in a Cosmos?

Nor is there anything to be gained by trying to reduce the miraculous elements in Christianity to a minimum, as too many Christian students and apologists have been tempted of late to do; knowing it is impossible to eliminate them all, but yet slurring them over, making them altogether vague, or at any rate keeping them in the background as minor and unimportant factors in Christianity. As the greater includes the less, so the Incarnation and the Resurrection include, and indeed necessitate, the miraculous powers of Christ. All stand or fall together. Our choice does not lie between keeping in or cutting out the supernatural element—i.e. the visible, objective, and special interventions of God—in the gospel of Christ. It lies between accepting the Gospel narrative as it stands, or being left without any rational explanation of Christ and of Christianity, without any explanation of the greatest crisis that has ever occurred in human history. It lies between accepting the supernatural or the unnatural.

Those great and supernatural events which constitute the bulwarks of the Christian creed can only be rejected by accounting for all the complex phenomena of Christianity, for Christ Himself, and for His abiding power over

men, in some other way. The problems that have to be thus solved are many.

If we give up the Divine Nature of Christ, how are we to account for the character of Christ, and the ennobling and purifying influence He has had on mankind? If we give up this, then the whole prophetic account of Christ in the Old Testament, and the historic accounts of Him in the New are demonstrably falsified, for all these agree in attributing to Him that superhuman and Divine Personality which we are denying: and yet they are demonstrably undeniable. Again, if we deny all the miracles and miraculous events of His Life, we must first explain how the narratives of His life got themselves written and invented. Without these events His whole history becomes morally impossible and unnatural, presenting us as in that case it does, with a series of effects without any causes. And yet we have seen that history could not have been written, had it not been true.

Before we can legitimately deny the reality of Christ's Resurrection we have to solve that often presented but never yet solved dilemma. "It is inconceivable that the disciples should have preached His Resurrection had they not believed it. It is impossible they should have believed it, had it not been true. For this astounding proclamation had to be made in the very city in which Jesus had been publicly executed, within seven weeks of His death, in presence of thousands who had witnessed His crucifixion*." Had it not been true, the Jewish rulers could unquestionably have confuted it, as they longed to do but never did.

Again if these facts are not facts, we must, as rational and honest persons, who dare not deny the force of

* *Basis of Faith*, Rev. E. R. Conder.

evidence, give up Christ not only as a Saviour but also as a Teacher and Example; we shall be driven to acknowledge that He was a Deceiver,—possibly of Himself, certainly of others. And is it possible for any sane person to come to this conclusion? It is only possible on grounds, which admitted in this case are absolutely destructive of all moral evidence and all testimony. If such historical and critical evidence as we have for the reality of the Gospel histories of Christ can deceive us so wholly, then no history whatever, no testimony of eye-witnesses can ever make us sure of any historical event whatever. If such a continuity of testimony on the one hand and of answering historical sequences on the other, as the Christian Churches afford us from the Resurrection downwards to the present day, can have been thus falsified all along, then the task of finding orderly sequences in human history must be given up as hopeless. If such a Person as the Christ of the Scriptures was a deceiver, whom shall men trust as truth seer, truth speaker? And if the spiritual life and power which He promised from the mission of the Holy Spirit, and which has been, and is to this day life and purification and strength to millions since He died, is all a delusion, what experience, what consciousness are we to rely upon?

Here another series of problems rises before us, which must be solved by the rejecters of our faith. "Why has Christ achieved so far more for mankind than any or than all philosophers or heroes*?

"How is it that He lays on each individual soul that great moral obligation which men have come to acknowledge†?"

The lives of Christians in every age since the death of

* Row's *Bampton Lectures*.

† F. Godet.

Christ have borne witness to the fact of His Resurrection, and to His present power. He said that after He was risen, He would still be with them always, to the end of the world. To the consciousness and in the experience of Christians He is with them; He said He would answer their prayers, they know He does answer them. He said He would not leave them desolate but would send to them the Comforter: they are not desolate, the Comforter is with them. He said that because He lives, they should live also; their conscious experience is that they live to God in the power and strength of Christ's Life. It is true all this is matter of inward experience, and speaks to the believer's consciousness in a way which he cannot make evident to others. Yet the fact that numbers of Christians in every age, holding the faith in so many different forms and amidst so much difference and error, have always had and do still have this consciousness, and testify in their most earnest moments to its absolute reality,—this I say is a fact which has to be accounted for, by those who deny Christ's resurrection and Christ's reign. There is no common consent to account for it. The dying pauper in the crowded workhouse ward who tells you of her sleepless nights of pain, is still more certain of this—"that Christ is with her, that He does support her, He does, He does." She does not know that the Martyrs of old had just the same experience; she does not know that she is bearing the same testimony as was borne by Polycarp and St Margaret, by Augustine and his mother, by Luther and Xavier. Wherever the Gospel goes, to the Esquimaux and the Bushman of Africa, to the Negro, and the New Zealander, just as certainly now, as it did to Pascal and Milton and Newton, it brings the same consciousness, invokes the same experience. For this concord of testimony

where intentional concurrence is out of the question, there must be a common cause: and the only common cause that is credible, is that it is true.

And we get the same result when we turn to the individual life and spirit of individual Christians in every age of the Church. It is true that the fruits of the faith in Christ, of the life in Christ, are seen very imperfectly in the lives of His people; are not to be seen at all in many who yet call themselves His. And yet in every age of the Church there have been those, whose whole lives have been so dominated by Christ's love that the world itself has been forced to take knowledge of them, that they have been with Jesus. And admitting to the full the inconsistencies and the failures of Christians, we confidently appeal to the honest judgement of all men who know the past, and are able to judge fairly of the present, to say, whether Christians have not been the salt of the earth even in the worst days of its corruption, the lights of the world in the darkest regions of its ignorance. There are some minds so unfortunate as to be colour-blind to goodness, sensitive only to evil, and so seeing evil everywhere. We do not ask these what estimate we are to make of such lives as those of Keble and Maurice and Venn, of Wilberforce and Thornton, of Whitfield and Wesley, of Howard and Fletcher, of Ken and Andrewes, Baxter and Howe, Flavel and Jeremy Taylor, Leighton and Bishop Hall, Hammond and Sir Henry Wotton, George Herbert and Bunyan; of Swartz and Brainerd the missionary, and Henry Martyn: of the Moravian Missionaries in Greenland; or voluntarily shutting themselves up till death in the leper lazaretto colony in South Africa, that they might bring Christ's message to the lepers; or selling themselves as slaves in the West Indies because only so could they

bring to their fellow-slaves the glorious freedom of the Gospel: of Xavier and his noble band of followers; of Felix Neff and Oberlin, of Lavater, De Guerin, of Fenélon and the Porte Royalistes, or of the glorious procession of martyrs and of saints who lighten up for us the darker ages of the past, by the evident devotion of their hearts to God and of their lives to men. "All these caught from the "Gospel history and the witness of the Church to its "creed a divine fire which made them living witnesses of "the truth and energy of the Christian life, not to their "own age only, but to all coming time. And in all ages "the most impressive of all witnesses have been found in "lowly places and in dark corners. The poor and the "suffering have always been the special heirs of God's "kingdom on earth, as its King prepared us to expect they "would be.... There is another point we should mark in "these records of the inner Christian life. It is the like- "ness of these true and faithful servants of the one Lord to "Him and to each other. They have all tried to follow "His steps; and the lineaments of His truthfulness, His "patience, His loving-kindness, His self-sacrifice, have been "more or less perfectly reproduced in each of them."... "What then has been the source of this life? by what "power has it been sustained? If we listen to those "who have lived it, it has come to them from their Lord, "and has been sustained by union with Him.—With- "out Him believed in as a real Saviour, a living Friend in "Heaven, Who had once died for them, and by His Spirit "lived in them, they tell us that their life would have "been impossible*."

Now this continued, superhuman and spiritual inter-

* *Our Christian Hope*, Lecture II. Rev. E. T. Vaughan; but see the whole passage.

vention in the hearts and lives and wills of men, which we know is going on now; which the unbroken testimony of Christian biography and History declare has been going on, ever since the Day of Pentecost so marvellously changed His first apostles; is that which Christ promised as one of the fruits of His Ascension. And it confirms in this particular also, that continuity of sequences which have made the churches of Christ in all ages contemporary witnesses to the truth of Christ, to the reality of His resurrection, and of His present reign in the hearts of His people. This concurrence of independent testimony from individuals in every part of the world, of every degree of education, in every age for nigh 1900 years, corroborated as it is by the changed lives, the increasing purity, patience, self-denying love and heroism to the reality of which their opponents have borne witness, proves that the Church of Christ has not been following cunningly devised fables, when she has made known to the world the power and the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are some of the results of Christ's Incarnation and of Christ's death and Resurrection, which have to be accounted for by all who undertake to settle the question of the truth or falsehood of our Revelation. And beyond these the concurrence of so many, totally independent streams of evidence, which we have so briefly and inadequately noted—many of them wholly modern, and undiscoverable till the developement of modern criticism and modes of investigation supplied us with new and more accurate tests of old narratives—and yet each leading up to the same conclusion,—the truth of our Faith, and not one impugning it—this concurrence itself is also a fact that has to be explained.

“The simplest way of accounting for all these facts is

“that it is true. Those who deny this, have yet to devise
“a theory of the origin of this gigantic delusion, which will
“be consistent with the facts of the case, and endure the
“criticism of sceptical minds themselves.”

The simplest, the most natural way of accounting for all the phenomena of Christianity is that Christ is true and His claims true. If Christ is the Incarnate Son of God, then the supernatural beauty and power of His Example; the superhuman wisdom and nobleness of His words; His miraculous insight into the hearts of men; His Divine patience and tenderness towards them; His power to heal alike their bodies and souls: His Divine self-sacrifice, His perfect holiness, are all in harmony and truly natural and inevitable. Then all the results of His life and death and Resurrection, the spread of His kingdom, the change from death to new life which followed it—all this is natural and necessary.

To deny the Incarnation and the Resurrection, does not alter one iota of these facts: it makes them indeed unnatural and monstrous, but it cannot make them less real. The character of Christ, the power of His example, the love and devotion He inspires, and all the results of His supposed coming abide, untouched by our hypotheses, and they render this hypothesis for ever incredible.

Nor is it a tale of the wonderful works of God in Christ, done of old but now ceased, which we are called to believe. Still with that marvellous patience with which He reasoned with the Priests and Pharisees of old,—“Though ye believe not me, believe the works”; still with that Divine meekness with which He showed the marks of the nails and the spear to doubting Thomas; He is answering the challenges and the doubts of His creatures now. Still He is appealing to the conscience and the

consciousness we have in common with Himself; still He is bidding us, one by one, come to Him, and make proof of His word, that we may know for ourselves and in the depths of our own hearts,—in the forgiveness and the conquest of our sinfulness, in receiving the gift of peace with God, and rest and joy and fellowship of the Spirit, in spiritual life and holiness begun in us—that He has faculties and powers over us and in us which we do not possess, which He is seeking to impart to us. Still He is saying to us, Be not faithless but believing.

NOTE A. (p. 25.)

Although this argument is not without a certain strength of its own, I should not have named it, but that the assertion combated in the text is so constantly used in popular criticism, to discourage any attention being paid to Christian evidences. And it may not be amiss at the outset of our inquiry, to call attention to the propriety of some slight consideration being paid to facts and figures, even when dealing with religious questions. When a well-known critic in a first-class review, discussing this very subject of the place of authority in matters of opinion, can calmly commit himself to such a statement as this: "very few persons have devoted "much thought and study to religious subjects, and those few "disagree,"—one cannot marvel that less instructed writers forget their history and imagine their statistics. It remains however a fact that there still exists a somewhat ancient and numerous body, called the Church of Christ; and that the number of able thoughtful and instructed men within it, who have devoted their lives to the study of revelation, (and that with the result of a full conviction of the profound reality of the fundamental articles of the Apostles' Creed,) much outnumber those who with equal power and diligence have devoted themselves to any one purely secular study. And certainly the greater names on this list, will well bear comparison with the ablest of their opponents. To say nothing of a Luther, a Pascal, a Schleiermacher or a Neander elsewhere, our own country has had a rich store of first-class

thinkers on these subjects, whose thoughts have historically moulded men's convictions. Lord Bacon whose religious writings and confession of faith* are too little remembered now; Hooker, Cudworth, Henry More, Bishop Butler, Leighton, Baxter, Howe, Coleridge, Maurice, Thirlwall,—whose names here will but provoke the question, why at least as many more have been omitted?—these are a few of the “very few persons who have devoted much thought or study to religious subjects.” As to the comparative amount of thought given to these subjects; we find that, at the census in 1871, the number of students and teachers in England and Wales was thus divided;

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Religious teachers. | 31,548. |
| Law students and practitioners | 15,894 |
| Medical men and students | 14,684 |
| Employed in Physical Sciences. | 955 |
| | } 31,533. |

The religious publications in the United Kingdom outnumber the publications on all other subjects put together: and their sale, as well as the amount of discussion they contain, will further serve to show ‘how few persons devote much attention to religious subjects.’ The enormous sale of the revised New Testament is a fact which bears on the same question.

NOTE B. (p. 65.)

We ought perhaps to take account of Professor Huxley's argument here. He wishes to show that it is possible to include consciousness, intelligence, volition and wisdom in the sequences, and yet to exclude them from the antecedents: and so get to matter as the first and adequate cause of mind, and of the Cosmos. He says:

“It is obvious that our knowledge of what we call the

* Vol. 7 of Works, Spedding and Heath's edition.

"material world, is to begin with at least as certain and definite as that of the spiritual world : and that our acquaintance with law is of as old a date as our knowledge of spontaneity."

As to the first of these clauses, the knowledge that '*I* perceive' must necessarily precede the knowledge 'perceive a material world.' The *I* is direct consciousness; the material world is given us in consciousness + our organs of sense + our automatic interpretations: so that we can hardly be so certain of the existence of the visible world as we are of our own consciousness. As to the second clause, I cannot but think that the child does as a matter of fact make acquaintance with spontaneity first; I think he learns to believe his mother can do for him what he wants her to do, if she chooses, a long while before he gets the notion that she is governed by a law that necessitates her doing it, or obliges her to leave it undone. But what all this makes for the next question in either case it is hard to see: Prof. Huxley goes on to say, "It is utterly impossible to prove that anything whatever may not be the effect of a material and necessary cause."

If not utterly impossible, it is somewhat difficult to catch hold of a statement so loose as this. What does he mean by "anything whatever"?—a mathematical straight line, time, jurisprudence, honour, the idea of cause itself? The impossibility of proving these cannot be the effects of a material cause, chiefly arises from the impossibility of conceiving what can possibly be meant by saying they are.

What does he mean too by "a material cause"? In ordinary language we understand by it, either a cause which acts directly on matter, such as energy: or else we mean some matter which is itself the cause of some phenomenal effect on our consciousness. Then the expression "material and necessary" is misleading; at least it suggests that an immaterial or moral cause is not a necessary cause, i.e. is not necessarily followed by its proper effect. And now take the argument. "It is utterly impossible to prove that any phenomenon what-

"ever may not be the effect of a material cause." Negative propositions of this kind are always incapable of disproof. Suppose we answer it thus. "It is utterly impossible to prove that any phenomenon whatever may not prove ultimately to be the effect of an immaterial cause. It is utterly and for ever impossible to prove there is no God."

Nor is it possible to convert Prof. Huxley's negative proposition into an affirmative one, it being impossible to prove that any phenomenon has a material cause for its ultimate cause. But the honest question now is, not what we cannot disprove, but what we can prove? And,—where mathematical demonstration is out of the question,—first, what is the just and reasonable inference from the evidence we have? and secondly, whether we have such an amount of cumulative evidence as practically eliminates the chances of error, and makes them so improbable that to persons of common sense, and to all who calculate the doctrine of probabilities, the evidence amounts to a moral demonstration. It does not seem that even Prof. Huxley can estimate the cumulative evidence for the potency of matter as amounting to much more than a "not impossible."

NOTE C. (p. 97.)

Some deny there is any such revelation in nature as Prof. Mozley speaks of, on the ground that there are races of men who seem destitute of any idea of a supreme Being: and that among those who have this idea, there is no consent as to His nature or attributes.

When language is imperfect as among savages it must be very difficult to express any idea of the Divine Being, or even to formulate it distinctly in their own minds. There is no need to prove that races hunted down to a state of worse than

animal destitution, have uniformly attended either to the religious or moral instincts, which yet we know form a part of man's consciousness. We do not go to idiots or to animal savages when we want to ascertain the facts of the human mind, for both are in a non-natural condition.

Neither do we expect that these great and many-sided revelations, if made in nature to all men, will be reproduced by all in the same form, or with the same completeness. But we ask, 'Is there no consent at all?' is there nothing in common between the religions of the world?

Sir F. Stephen illustrates this objection in a way which will, I think, very much help us to understand its force*. "Three persons," he says, "agree that they distinctly saw 'something at a given place and time. A says it was a man; B a horse; C a bird. In what do they agree?'"

Well, all three agree they saw a living creature there, and it appeared to all three to be of the vertebrate, warm-blooded order. The points on which they agree therefore include all the attributes and characteristics common to this class of beings. On this basis of agreement, also, there is a foundation for further sifting and investigation, by comparing these facts with attendant circumstances; such as the marks left by the creature, and the comparative power of the three witnesses as to keenness of sight, accuracy of observation and advantages of situation, which might enable us to ascertain which of the three was probably right. But the comparative importance of the points of agreement and disagreement depends on the subject we are inquiring into. If it were a murder the latter would be all important. If it were another world than ours on which this living creature was seen, the importance of the points on which they agree would be far the greatest: think what a revelation such a discovery would be, and how many characteristics of that world would be justly inferred from it.

"Is not this," Sir F. Stephen goes on, "is not this exactly

* *Nineteenth Century*, Vol. i. 'Sir G. Lewis and Mr Gladstone.'

"the case of three persons believing respectively in the Trinity, "Allah, and Nirvāna?" It certainly seems very nearly the same. "Each believes in a divine power, superhuman, and "imperceptible by the senses; *but each belief excludes the "other two.*" Let us examine these three beliefs a little then.

"Nirvāna" is not a Power, but a State*. It is that state which the worthy one attains who is in the fourth and last stage of the noble path of a perfect life. All pride, self-righteousness, ignorance, being extinguished in him, he is free from delusion and sin: he experiences only right desires for himself, and tender pity for others, goodwill without measure among all beings, unhindered love and friendliness to the whole world. To him there is no more fever of grief; exempt from evil desire and well trained in the teaching of Gautama, he is in the enjoyment of Nirvāna. Nirvāna literally means the going-out or extinction of that sinful, yearning, grasping condition of heart and mind, which Buddhism teaches to be at once the root of all evil, and the cause of existence being continued through transmigrations. Nirvāna is a moral condition, of perfect peace, goodness and wisdom: in this state the worthy one is still alive: when justice is satisfied by the wearing out and passing away of all the results of his former sins he will have reached Pari-nirvāna, "And the wise will go out like the "flame of a candle."

As to the moral state at which we are to aim, and as to the fact that this state has been and may be attained by individual men, as knowledge extinguishes ignorance and love extinguishes selfishness, the teaching of Buddhism no more excludes Christianity than the second great commandment excludes the first.

The writer from whom I have taken this account, omits all mention of the Buddhist faith as to the existence of a Divine Power, superhuman and invisible: except that in a note he

* See 'Buddhist Doctrine of Nirvāna,' *Contemp. Review*, Jan. '77, by J. W. Rhys David.

enumerates "among the four acknowledged Mysteries of "Buddhism (which are also" he adds, in the truly assertive spirit of modern thought, "the four points on which it is most "certainly wrong") these two, ii, the supernatural powers of the Buddha, and iv, the Omniscience of the Buddha. Here, then, are two other points of agreement between these three beliefs: on which each, instead of excluding, includes the other two.

A fuller account of this part of this remarkable faith is given by Prof. Maurice*. "Buddhism is an attempt at the highest, least material idea of Divinity. Buddha is clear Light, perfect wisdom.—He is one, the One: it is only with the inward eye purged from sensual corruptions, that He can in any wise be apprehended.—To the Buddhist the belief in God is the most awful and real of thoughts; not one thrust back into the corner of a mind which is occupied with everything else, but which he thinks demands the highest exercise of all the faculty he has. It is something which is to make a change in himself, which is at once to destroy and to perfect him. And the effect is a practical one. Buddha is ever at rest. Can His worshipper be turbulent? can he admit any rude or violent passions into his heart? He must cultivate gentleness, evenness, reverence and tenderness for all creatures....To him all men are equal, 'for the poor man of the vilest race may 'become one with Buddha.'"

We need not follow him as he shows how from this pure Theism the Buddhist got lost in Atheism; and from that nothingness is forced to assert a Triad of powers: Intelligence, the pure Buddha; Dharma, the principle of matter and that out of which all things are formed; and Sanga, the Mediating Influence, which binds the informing mind to the dead, formless thing upon which it works. There has, he says, been much controversy on this subject, but this explanation of their doc-

* *Religions of the World*, pt. 1, Lecture 3, pp. 67—76.

trine given by a Buddhist priest, is borne out by the symbols in their temples*.

This is enough to show that the beliefs of Buddhism, and the Christian's faith as to the Divine Being, His attributes, and the resulting duties of men, are parallel, and exclude each other about as much as the child's belief in the multiplication table which he can work imperfectly, excludes the youth's belief in the calculus which he is beginning to master.

Is there any more truth in the assertion that the Mahomedan's faith in Allah and the Christian's faith in the Holy Trinity are mutually destructive?

There were in the faith in Allah, there are in that faith where it still lives, four great facts, and four relations resulting from them :

1. God is, the Divine and Almighty Sovereign, to Whose will all human wills must be bowed in subjection.

2. God the Lord of all is the one living and true God, the faithful are His ministers to beat into powder all gods whom men have invented.

3. God has revealed Himself and made known His will to men: they can hear and obey His voice. That revelation is completed in a book, because a Divine Record is necessary of a Divine Revelation.

4. Not only their Prophet, but all the faithful are called by God to the work of proclaiming Him and subjecting all men to Him. These great faiths (learnt in their substance from the Old and New Testament) are identical with the Christian faith. "And though the acknowledgment of this Divine Being "may imply much more than the Mahomedan perceived, it does "imply that which he did receive. Only because they have "regarded this one great relation, of subjects to a Sovereign "will; and have not received that other truth, of a loving "Father, designing to raise His children out of their sensual "degradation; their faith in a living will has degenerated into

* See also a further parallel, pp. 198—201, *Religions of the World*.

“the acknowledgment of a dead fate. All that is positive
 “then in this Mahomedan faith is one with the faith taught in
 “the Old Testament, and presupposed in the New. Christi-
 “anity adds new and further revelations of God’s relations
 “to His creatures: it does not deny, it would be incompre-
 “hensible and unmeaning if it did not include, the old.”

However unintelligible the faith in the Trinity may appear, yet those who do not receive it are bound to deal with it as it is held by the Church. And our faith in the Trinity is inseparable from, is built up upon, the faith in the Unity of God, and without this would be self-destructive. “We believe
 “that Unity including Union, excludes numerical Oneness.
 “When the Mahomedans went on to declare that the Unity of
 “God is a numerical Oneness, they lost the true idea of Unity:
 “and so they lost sight of, and then rejected the Revelation,
 “that the One Absolute Sovereign is also the Loving Redeemer,
 “the Sanctifying Influencer and Purifier of the wills and
 “affections of men.”

This discussion is a fruitful example of the fact, that in moral subjects men find readily what they look for. Sir F. J. Stephen was looking for differences, and so concluded there is no agreement. Mr Maurice was comparing these three religions together, to find the common secret of their power to persuade and govern men. I think we must maintain that when the question is, how far do two sets of beliefs agree or differ, the scientific method is that which Mr Maurice adopted: it is not possible to ascertain what the difference is, until we have ascertained how far and in what respects the creeds agree together.

NOTE D. (p. 155.)

In the text we have to do chiefly with the reasoning of phenomenalists, assuming the premises they give to be correct when they are not contradicted by demonstrated science. The

data given above are denied by Dr C. Elam in *Winds of Doctrine*. He states :

i. It is in no sense true that protoplasm 'breaks up' into carbonic acid, water, and ammonia. A compound body can only break up into its constituent parts, and these are not the constituent parts of protoplasm : to convert it into these three compounds requires for every 100 parts of protoplasm nearly 170 parts of oxygen.

ii. It is not true, that when carbonic acid, water, and ammonia disappear, that in their place, under the influence of pre-existing protoplasm, an equivalent weight of matter of life appears. Every chemist knows that there can be no weight of protoplasm equivalent, chemically speaking, to any amount of carbonic acid, water, and ammonia.

In water the whole of its constituent parts combine, to form an equal weight of the compound.

In protoplasm the so-called elements do not combine at all. On the contrary, they are uncombined, or decomposed, by a process and affinities unknown in our laboratories. The carbonic acid and ammonia are decomposed, the carbon and nitrogen are assimilated : part of the oxygen is eliminated in the leaves, and part is destined to perform various functions.

iii. Protoplasm is never formed except under immediate contact and influence of pre-existing and living protoplasm. It is this appearance of an entirely new and distinct order of affinities, that constitutes the 'break' Huxley cannot see. There is no one curve the elements of which will comprehend the phenomena of matter, of life, and of mind.

"Such teaching is only tolerable on account of the ignorance of those by whom it was accepted."

NOTE E. (p. 284.)

There is one difficulty it may be well to consider here ; that arising from the different forms in which Christianity

presents itself, and the bitter disputes thence arising between the various churches. It is objected that what we call Christianity is not one religion but many: that a really Divine Revelation would be one; whilst those who say they hold by the Christian Revelation are really holding different and even inconsistent faiths. I think this objection is most distinctly stated by Sir G. C. Lewis. He says, "Opinions on "scientific subjects, though they may spring from different "sources, and for a time follow distinct courses, at last flow "into one main stream.....The distinctive tenets of the several "Christian churches *not only spring from different sources* but "continue to flow in different channels. Scientific opinions "follow a certain law of progressive developement, error is "gradually eliminated, truth is established by a continually "enlarging consensus. Opinion in the Christian Churches on "the subject of their distinctive tenets is rather variable than "progressive; oscillating backwards and forwards it does not "tend to joint action or a common centre*."

In the first place we note considerable exaggeration in both these statements. If scientific opinions tend to converge, scientific knowledge grows not by agreement but by diversity of opinion. I take the first example that comes to hand; it is from one of Norman Lockyer's papers†. "The sun's distance from the earth, one of the most important questions in "science, may now be looked upon as settled. It is difficult "to imagine a more beautiful instance of the value of the "doubtful suspicious side of the scientific mind. Till now "95 millions of miles had for a century been an article of "faith, and almost represented a dogma, and all our tremendous scientific apparatus might have been rendered "powerless and ineffectual for a time, if this other scientific "power had lain dormant, or been less energetically employed." This then being the way in which scientific knowledge slowly

* 'On the Influence of Opinion in Matters of Authority.'

† Written in 1868.

grows towards agreement; why should it be considered a proof that Christianity is tending to greater disunion, because the very same process of questioning and requestioning the Sacred Records, is still being energetically employed in their study? It is true that theologians are often condemning this questioning; but what concerns us now, is the fact that God has never allowed any to succeed in stifling it, nor is it so certain that scientific opinion taken as a whole is visibly tending to converge. Instead of a continually enlarging consensus between the distinct physical sciences, at the present time the progress of each and the specialism in which it involves its students tends rather to separation: so that it has been seriously asked "Will not the building of our temple of the sciences soon have to stop, from the growing inability of the labourers to understand each other's language, or even to comprehend what the other gangs of labourers are about?"

Then we find that at the present time scientific opinion is divided "on many fundamental points, on which there used to be agreement." Such as these:

i. "As to the physical* cause of gravitation, and its modes.

ii. "As to the nature of matter.

iii. "Though nearly all the motions of the heavenly bodies, and all the phenomena of light and sound, are involved in the question, what is ether and what are its properties? yet neither of these are known, and both are much disputed."

iv. About the conservation of energy, Evolution, the Nebular theory, "there are such disputes and so little is agreed upon, that the amount of guesswork threatens us with a real retrogression of science."

v. "The dissipation of energy and its consequences are equally disputed. The writers on it contradict each other: and where they agree it is not on any truth of science, but in conjectures the data of which are not known."

* i. e. antecedent cause.

vi. "Geology is still more nebulous.....And these are but "specimens of the want of agreement and differences of opinion "existing at the present time on the most fundamental and "elementary data of physical science: and the differences as "to the true succession of derivative phenomena are certainly "not less numerous*."

Now is it possible for any one to maintain that the Christian churches differ from each other as to the data of the Christian creed, to anything like the same extent or on such fundamental points as these? Take the four chief divisions,—the Eastern, the Roman Catholic, the Anglican and the Presbyterian churches. These all hold fundamentally the same faith as to the Unity of the Godhead, the Holy Trinity, The Fatherhood of God and the Incarnation of the Son: as to the fall of man, the redemption, the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ; as to His priestly and kingly work now in Heaven for us; the Mission of the Holy Spirit, the second Advent and final victory of Christ. These all acknowledge Christ as their Lord, and the Head of the Church; that the Church militant and the Church triumphant are one in Him. They all agree in the use of the two sacraments, of prayer, praise, and preaching. Their union in moral teaching is even more striking; they all acknowledge the same divine code, they all appeal to the same sacred books; they all seek the victory over sin from the same Source of Grace, though often through different channels.

And is it of such unanimity of consent as this, that we can be gravely told, opinion in the several Christian Churches does not point to a common centre, and their distinctive tenets spring from different sources? Would it not be nearer the truth to say, there is as yet no such general agreement among men of science, as there is as to the fundamental truths of the Christian revelation, amongst the national churches which hold the two great Creeds?

* *Uncertainties of Physical Science*, Canon Birks, 1875.

The history of the Arian controversy will serve as an answer to the assertion, that in Christian opinion there is "no "progressive developement, error not being eliminated or truth "established by a gradually enlarging consensus." And then we must ask, on what subjects did the Churches differ from each other? As to the time of keeping Easter; as to the procession of the Holy Ghost; they differ still as to methods of procedure as to Church government; as to the comparative importance to be given to the Incarnation, the Death, or the Resurrection of our Saviour; as to modes of expression in public worship; they differ perhaps chiefly now in certain additions to our creeds held by some churches, and denied by others: for example in respect of the Holy Communion; all agree in acknowledging the spiritual or subjective presence of Christ; some add His corporeal or objective presence. Purgatory is an addition to the common belief in a future life, in Heaven and Hell.

That the fierceness of the debates raised on these secondary points, and the mad selfwilledness that so often strives to widen the divisions thence arising, are grievous blots upon Christians no one will deny. But all they can prove against the Christian Revelation is, that it is not as yet fully understood, nor as yet completed. And it is even easy to exaggerate the evils of these differences of opinion on details, in respect of which the wise old saying is perhaps true, that

"If all the world were of one religion
Many a living truth would die."

The greater zeal and angrier contention which has marked the progress of Christian study, as compared with the disputes of mathematicians and physicists, is the natural consequence of the vital and endless importance of the one, the comparatively little importance of the other. To ascertain the relations of a parabolic curve, or the properties of germs, is most interesting and valuable; but to be ignorant or even

mistaken on these points will not spoil our own lives, nor make them valueless for others.

But if we and all men have an eternal inheritance of holiness which at this moment we are gaining or losing; if we and every human being, are personally called upon to know God in Christ, that we may be able to work with Christ; if by failing to do this, whether wilfully or not, we may become the cause of others losing or failing also; if "every error we fall into here, must bring down on itself, by necessary and eternal laws—more necessary and causative than those of physical science—some cognate misery: then of all errors these are by far the most dangerous, reaching as they must do through the evil they work in this world, into the next*." And we may well be even passionately zealous to hold fast that portion of the truth which it has been given to us to know, which is helping us to fulfil our part of the Master's work, which is guiding us right onward amidst this twilight of the Dawn.

* Charles Kingsley, *Life*, vol. II.



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